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The House of Conrad

Elias Tobenkin

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THE HOUSE OF CONRAD

BY

ELIAS TOBENKIN

AUTHOR OF "WITTE ARRIVES"

Of suns and worlds I've nothing to be quoted;
How men torment themselves, is all I've noted.
—Goethe's *Faust*

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

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BOOK I
GOTTFRIED CONRAD

THE HOUSE OF CONRAD

CHAPTER I

VESPER BELLS

SHE stood in the open doorway listening to the peal of the church bells, which were summoning the residents of New York's young German colony, *Kleindeutschland,* to Sunday service. A mild June breeze was sweeping in invisible ripples through the atmosphere. From a vacant lot upon which grass had grown a foot high, a faint odor of unmown hay rose to her nostrils and in its wake came memories — memories of home *drüben,* of her village *over there* on the bank of the Rhine.

"*Drüben!*" Her lips barely moved as she spoke the word. "*Over there!*" Her wistful eyes pierced the haze that hovered in front of her like a canvas. The ringing of the bells became indistinct. . . . Her home rose before her eyes. . . . The village, the Rhine — Old Father Rhine —

Along the unpaved street leading to the church the villagers were moving in family clusters. In one of these groups she recognized a girl friend. She was about to wave to her, but she caught herself: it was not seemly. Her father was choosing his way carefully along the street and was keeping a sharp eye on his children to see that they did likewise. He could think of nothing more sacrilegious than to enter the House of God with dusty boots. Dear old Father! She noticed how small their family circle had grown: two of her

brothers had left home. And she — she too would be going soon to America, to *him* —

"*Ach!*" She woke from her reveries with a shrug. "Dreams, vain dreams." All this was over now — forever. She was not home, not in the Old World, not on the Rhine — but in New York, in America. She was no longer a carefree girl, no longer Ännchen Launitz. Now she was Anna Conradi — Frau Conradi to her German countrywomen, and Mrs. Conrad to her Irish neighbors. Yes, she was a wife and a mother. There, in the crib, lay her child, her two weeks' old son, who had not been baptized — May the Lord be merciful! . . .

Her thoughts turned to her husband. Gottfried was obstinate. *Ach,* those Prussians, those Prussians, how intense they were, how stubborn! Nevertheless she would try once more — to-day. He was in such a festive mood — perhaps he would yield to her. He did yield to her wishes on occasions — he loved her so. She would appeal to him, tell him how it would grieve her, would give her no rest to have their child go through life — a heathen.

The tears — they were coming readily since her confinement — welled up in her eyes. She stepped back from the door lest she be seen weeping, and going over to where the crib stood, she bent over her sleeping infant and kissed him lightly. Her husband's footsteps sounded far down the hall. She wiped her eyes and face hastily.

The Conradi household was young. Gottfried Conradi had been in the New World only two years. He arrived in the spring of 1866 — one of the first of the "Lassalleans" to come to America. He had been a bookbinder in the Old World. But the Germans in New York, at least those with whom he came in contact, were nearly all cigarmakers, so he started in to learn a new trade. It was six months before

Gottfried Conradi was earning a man's pay. He was economical, however, and in spite of his small wages — he averaged only $9 a week — he managed by the end of his first year to save up passage money for his Ännchen, and sent for her without delay.

She arrived on a Wednesday in July. Gottfried declared a holiday for the rest of the week and proceeded to feather a little home for himself and his sweetheart. There were plenty of "nests" to rent in *Kleindeutschland,* and they all looked alike and cost about the same. The home of a young couple consisted of two rooms, or rather of one room, a kitchen, with a bedroom built in at the farther end. A rear flat cost six dollars a month; a front flat was a dollar a month higher. Conradi took a rear flat. It was cheaper, and Ännchen liked it even better. For the windows in the rear flat looked out into the yard, and into other people's yards. Some of these yards had grass, and here and there even a tree, while the street had nothing but cobblestones and dirt.

The furnishings of the room were simple. They consisted of a bed, a table, three chairs, a second-hand sofa, and a hand-made cabinet which was to serve as a dresser and a bookcase. By Friday evening the little home was in order and Conradi and his bride of a few hours moved into it.

It was into this home that their first-born had come the last day of May, 1868. That Sunday afternoon the little flat was to be the scene of a celebration the exact nature of which Conradi had surrounded with much mystery and secrecy. He was planning to surprise his wife. It was to be their day of days. That afternoon the "House of Conradi" was to be founded in the New World — was to be formally launched. It was to be a day of dedication. The "House of Conradi," as personified in his two weeks' old

son, was to be dedicated to the "Cause." Gottfried's eyes filled with a haze every time he thought of this future House of his, what it would stand for, what it would mean to the cause of the proletariat in America.

His wife had asked him daily since the child was born what he intended to name the boy. But that, too, he kept a secret. That afternoon it would all come out.

All morning he had been busy trying to supplement his meager household for the occasion. He had borrowed chairs from one of the neighbors and spoons from another. He had provided himself with half a dozen glasses and extra plates. The refreshments were properly cared for. The bottles of beer were carefully laid out in the washtub, which served as an ice-box for the occasion. But the ice had melted sooner than Gottfried calculated it would and he had gone down to look for an iceman. He returned presently with a pailful of ice.

"There, that will hold them," he said, rising and straightening himself out. He had arranged the pieces of ice in the washtub to his entire satisfaction. He now looked up at his wife. In the excitement of the preparations for the day's event he had hardly noticed her all morning. She could not be of any help to him, as she was still weak, so he went about arranging things alone.

"What now?" he asked abruptly, as he perceived traces of tears in Anna's eyes. She was not strong enough to hide successfully her troubled mind, and broke down under his searching gaze.

"Gottfried —" She took a step forward, but halted. "Gottfried, I — I thought — perhaps — maybe you would change your mind about — baptizing the child — I —"

The gleam, hard and irritated, that came into his eyes froze the words in her throat.

"*Was?*" he hissed. "You want a priest, *ein Pfaff*, here in my house? I, have my son baptized? Absurd!"

She made no attempt to stem his words, which came in torrents. What! Had all his harangues with her been in vain? She still failed to understand him! And he thought he had made it plain to her! He was through with the church, with priests, forever through! He wanted her to remember this. They were through with that humbug — they, the Lassalleans. They were, in fact, the sworn enemies of priestcraft, they, the socialists. That was what they had organized the *Freidenkerverein* of New York for — to fight against religion, against the influence of the priests, who were seeking to instil in the New World the same religious poisons that had festered the Old. Enlightenment — that was what the Free-thinking Society of New York was aiming at. They would enlighten the people about the clergy. They would show the masses how priestcraft at all times and in all countries had ranged itself on the side of the exploiters and against the workers, against the common man. They, the disciples of Ferdinand Lassalle in the New World, would not rest until the spooks of religion had been driven off the earth. He baptize his son! How could such a thought enter her mind!

"But," he continued after some time, and his voice lost its harshness, "I thought, Ännchen, you understood it long ago. I explained it all to you — it is so simple. We revolutionists are fighting the old order of things. The church, the priests, are the pillars of this order, its chief support, its greatest source of strength. They are the worst enemies of the proletariat. Do you see, *Liebchen?*"

She was looking at him with her large, liquid eyes, which seemed even larger now since her confinement. Her face was thinner, much thinner, and pale. Her lips were bloodless.

But her braids of golden hair which twined themselves about her head were as alluring as ever.

"My poor, dear Ännchen!" he murmured, taking her in his arms. "Don't worry your little head about these things. It will all come out right. Just leave it to me."

He picked her up like a child — he was a head taller than his wife — and carried her to the sofa. He noticed how frail she had grown and was seized with pity for her. He sat down beside her, took her blond head into his lap and played with her hair.

The day was drawing to a close and in the kitchen of the Conradi home the shadows were gathering. But the guests who came to participate in the celebration had no thought of leaving. They were all of an age with Gottfried, all under twenty-five. That the noise they were making and the strain of the day might have been too much for the convalescing Mrs. Conradi never entered their heads. They were thoughtful, sensitive, and considerate men, but in such matters they were still inexperienced.

"That was well done," said Heinrich Kolb to Mrs. Conradi upon entering, and shook hands with her much too heartily for her still raw frame. "It is good of you to have given Gottfried a son. We shall need boys in this country for our work. There is a great struggle ahead and we shall need men — fighters."

Heinrich Kolb was the most intellectual man in the small group of socialists who carried the theories of Lassalle to the New World. He was the son of a landowner in Silesia and was a student at the University of Berlin at the time Lassalle organized the Universal German Workmen's Association. His enthusiastic praise of the new labor organization was not looked upon with favor by the University authorities, but

Kolb gave them the slip, as he expressed it, by throwing his academic career overboard and becoming a labor agitator. With a number of other Lassalleans he drifted to Switzerland, where the propaganda of socialism was given greater freedom than in the Fatherland. But here, too, Kolb found himself hemmed in by too many limitations. The field was too narrow. His mind's eye looked longingly toward the New World, and one fine day he boarded one of the pioneer steamers of the time for New York. It was on this steamer that he made the acquaintance of Gottfried Conradi, an acquaintance which was to ripen into a lifelong friendship, despite the disparity in the standing, character, and education of the two.

For Conradi at that time had no more than the rudiments of an education. He could read and write, knew a smattering of history and with this his education ended. What attracted Kolb to Conradi was the fact that, like himself, Gottfried was a Prussian and could become enthusiastic and hate with the intensity of a Prussian. While Conradi was traveling through the Rhine provinces as a journeyman, he had attended several meetings called by the Universal German Workmen's Association. At one of these meetings he had heard Ferdinand Lassalle speak; and the influence of the man never left him from that moment. He read all the socialist pamphlets he could find, and while he knew nothing of political economy Gottfried nevertheless was thoroughly familiar with Lassalle's " iron law of wages " and the bearing this iron law had upon the fortunes of the working class.

Kolb was convinced that he had found in the Prussian workman an ally in the cause of socialism of uncommon worth and power. An intimate friendship grew up between them. For years Kolb looked after the education of Conradi, di-

rected his reading, was initiating him into every branch of knowledge with which he himself was familiar.

Mrs. Conradi accepted the congratulations of Heinrich Kolb with a happy smile. She was never quite able to follow Kolb. He was such a handsome man and so well educated. His gait, his carriage, was that of a nobleman. Several girls in the colony were casting longing eyes at him; but he seemed oblivious to feminine charms. In his eyes there was always a pursuing gaze — not, however, for the objects near at hand, but for things far off, unseen, intangible. Mrs. Conradi was glad to see Kolb. She was proud that her husband should know such a man, should count him as a friend.

The other five men were cigarmakers with whom Gottfried worked. They were all unmarried and were frequent visitors at the Conradi home, which they regarded rather worshipfully. They had not yet found their love. Each of them had brought with him half a dozen of the finest Havanas he could make, as his contribution to the day's festivities.

The cake and fruit had been eaten and the beer was drunk between volleys of speech and strains of full-throated song that rolled and thrilled and defied its way out of the little flat, and the confines of their own tenement walls, into the neighboring houses. The strong, massive voices brought the neighbors to the windows to see whence these strains of song came and what the occasion was.

"*Ich will die Freiheit nicht verkaufen,*" they sang lustily. No! Never would they bow to a tyrant, never betray, never sell Freedom. . . . And then Heinrich Kolb spoke. The "springtime of nations" which inspired this revolutionary hymn of Herwegh's had been crushed in Germany by reaction. But a new *Völkerfrühling* was coming. This newer springtime of nations would be ushered in by the proletariat.

It would be ushered in on American soil. America was to be the new Jerusalem of the working classes. The New World had long ago rid itself of kings; it would be the first to rid itself of economic injustice and capitalist oppression. And it was up to them who had sat at the feet of the "Messiah of the working class" to let their voices be heard here. They, the Lassalleans, must be the first to raise the banner of the social revolution in the New World.

No one noticed when Kolb ceased speaking, but all suddenly found themselves singing the martial strains of the *Banner Song:*

"Up, and let the banner wave,
Hosts of toilers, rise in mass!
Be ye victors, or in death
Guard the banner of your class."

Yes, they would hold the banner of the proletariat high! They would defend it to a man, they, the Lassalleans. It was Gottfried speaking. He stood up the length of his full six feet, and he stood there tense, rigid, towering above his guests. Mrs. Conradi was sitting on the edge of the bed, waving the smoke away from her child's face. As her husband's speech became more fluent and incisive her cheeks flushed. She listened to him with palpitating heart. She did not understand all he was saying; it sounded strange to her. Where did he get so much knowledge, such a gift of speech, she wondered. She was recalling how he came into her life, their first meeting.

He came to their village a wandering mechanic and found work with a neighbor of theirs, a book-binder. They met — they could not help meeting — he passed their house several times daily. Once he asked for a flower and they talked. And after that she was his. She loved him from the first. She could not resist him. Ah, what a lover he was!

Her father objected to him at first. A son of the Rhine, old Launitz did not like the Prussians. But he gave in to her: he had to. She told him she could not live without Gottfried. Conradi did not cherish the idea of going into the army for three years and leaving her alone. So he went to America and she followed him after a year. But what a change had taken place in him during that year! What bitterness had come over him! Gottfried was always hating now, always denouncing some one, something: the rich, his employers, the government. What was it that was eating his heart away? Was it disappointment with the New World, disillusionment? She, too, was disillusioned. She was missing the village, their home with the flowers and trees and the bench in front of it. She was missing these things greatly. Was it this that was troubling her husband, too? But, no, it was something more! That alone could not make Gottfried so unhappy. Were they not treating him right at the shop — he was so bitter against employers?

Her husband's voice meantime had risen higher and higher and his eyes had assumed a fierce, threatening blaze. He was assailing, denouncing, reviling, the capitalists, the priests, the church. He was speaking of a new religion, hailing a new god, the god of vengeance, the god of fury, who would wipe out old scores between oppressors and oppressed. . . .

"We are on the eve of great events in this country," Conradi said, and was followed by the breathless attention of every one present. "We have just seen the close of a civil war that has put an end to human slavery forever. Many German immigrants have distinguished themselves in this war. They have given freely of their blood that the shackles of the black slaves might be broken forever.

"But," and his voice vibrated with fierce eloquence, "there

is another slavery in this country, an economic slavery, capitalist slavery. Another war is coming, a war upon this newer slavery. The workers are recruiting their legions. We Germans, we Lassalleans, must be in the forefront in this coming struggle of right against might. In this struggle against capitalism one of the fortresses first to be demolished is religion. The church, priestcraft, is as strong in the New World to-day as it is in the Old, and it must go. We must defy priestcraft not merely with words, but with deeds. Here "— with a wave of his arms he pointed to the crib where his two weeks' old son was slumbering peacefully. " Here," he began once more; but his speech was broken by the wild, terrified look with which his wife stared at him.

Anna had listened to her husband's speech with growing horror. She did not mind his denunciations of the rich and the powerful. She knew that America was a free country, that one could speak one's mind here and not be bothered by the police, not be arrested. But when Gottfried began speaking without the slightest restraint, or the least reverence, about the church, about God, it was the last straw. She could stand it no longer. She would have cried out, but her voice failed her.

Anna never grasped her husband's irreligion. She could not follow him in his fierce hatred of the church and the clergy. On the other hand, she could not combat it. She could not argue with Gottfried. Mentally she was a child compared to him.

When Gottfried pointed to the crib, to their son, in the midst of his vituperations against the church, against the Deity, a terrible fear seized her — fear for her child. It seemed to her that her husband would draw down the wrath of Heaven momentarily, and that this wrath would strike her infant. . . . Her husband was drawing down Calamity

upon their child. . . . She stood speechless, paralyzed with terror and pain.

What her voice refused to do, however, her eyes did. They had spoken. The look of agony, of wild alarm, in them had broken her husband's flow of oratory. The men in the room sensed the awkward situation. Kolb was about to rise and go over to Mrs. Conradi to explain to her, to calm and assure her, but Gottfried waved him to remain in his seat.

Conradi could not again master his eloquence, but he was still master of his defiance. In a few sharp, provocative sentences he announced that he was here and then dedicating his young son to the cause of the proletariat, that his child would be a living defiance to the church and priestcraft — he would go unbaptized! This son of his which he was dedicating to "the Cause" would be named after their great leader and teacher, the torch-bearer of socialism and freedom — Ferdinand Lassalle.

A shout of joy came from every breast. Everybody now rushed over to Anna to congratulate her. In the hubbub that arose the child awoke and as she lifted him out of the crib every one of the men took a swift look at the wrinkled, crying face with mingled feelings of humility and reverence. In an instant Conradi had risen in their eyes, and his child with him.

Anna meantime was hugging the infant and muttering under her breath, "Fritzi, Fritzchen, Lieber Fritzchen." She was in ecstasy. At last her child had a name; she could now call him, talk to him.

The noise and excitement which arose was not at all in accord with Conradi's plan. His speech was only half finished; there were other things he wanted to say. He wanted to tell them that he was here and then founding the "House of Conradi" on American soil, that he meant that

house, his house, to stand for great things in the life of the American proletariat, that he would make the House of Conradi a house of defiance, a house of revolt, a house that would value freedom above all. . . .

But he was not allowed to finish his speech. He had spoken too long already. Every one of his guests was clamoring for expression. Their hearts were brimming over. Even speech now seemed a slow, inadequate vehicle for their overpowering emotions. They vibrated with song. They said not a word, but some one started a tune and in an instant they were singing loudly, wildly, passionately, Heinrich Heine's " Silesian Weavers."

> " A curse on the God to whom vainly we prayed
> From pangs of hunger and winter's cold —"

They hurled out anathema as if the God whom they were thus menacing were there in person, were offering resistance.

> " A curse on the king, the king of the rich,
> Who was deaf to our anguish, who scorned our pain —"

It seemed as if the walls would give way to the pressure of the fierce volume of song.

The neighbors from the tenement house opposite were at the windows peering across the yard into the Conradi flat, more amazed than ever. No one noticed this, however. The men sang not only with their lungs but with their aching, homesick hearts.

> " We're weaving, we're weaving! "

The last quivering line of the triple curse of the " Silesian Weavers " was dying in the fast falling shadows of the night, when the bells in the church directly around the corner from the Conradi tenement began to peal their summons to vespers. An instant silence fell over all. Place and distance seemed

obliterated. Exactly thus church bells were now pealing their vesper call in the villages of Bavaria, in Mecklenburg, on the Rhine. The thought of home, parents, friends, flitted through the minds of every one. . . . And of the church, the dear old village church in the shadow of whose oaks they played as boys. Their hatred of priestcraft, bellowed out so fiercely a few minutes earlier, somehow did not seem to apply to this church of their childhood. The vesper sounds now seemed to have lost all significance as messengers of religion. The ringing of the bells fell on their ears softly, reminiscently, like memories of childhood. It went to the heart like a parent's blessing —

> "O bells of folly, bells of creed,
> How sweetly you resound home!"

Anna lit the lamp. The shadows were gone and with them the memories. Every one rose to his feet. Each of the guests shook hands with Gottfried and his wife heartily. But there was also a slight embarrassment in the leave-taking. For each felt that he had been just a little soft toward the end, a trifle sentimental. He did not mean to be so, but he could not help it. In fact, he knew he would go on being sentimental the rest of the evening. It was a moonlight night — he would go to his room and read Heine or play the concertina. . . .

When the dishes were cleared away and Anna Conradi, thoroughly worn out by the noise and excitement of the day, sought the old sofa and lay down for a brief rest, Gottfried came up quietly. He bent over her, brought his face close to hers, kissed her fervently, passionately, and began speaking. At first he spoke in broken sentences. Then — then he was making a speech to her, the speech he had meant to

make that afternoon — about the "House of Conradi," about their son Ferdinand Lassalle, about his future. All defiance had left him. There was no hatred in his voice, no bitterness, only a sadness and a longing, an immense yearning. He was painting to her the "House of Conradi." And it sounded wonderful, like a fairy tale. It was to be a house of brave and honest men, a house that would be respected by Americans and would be looked up to with envy and admiration by their countrymen.

His voice grew husky. He could not go on. He sought his wife's face. But her cheeks, too, were wet with tears. She had been crying for some time without his noticing it. She was happy.

CHAPTER II

FREDDY RECALLS

THE name Ferdinand Lassalle which Gottfried Conradi bestowed upon his infant son amid much solemnity and vehemence, was short-lived. When on a morning in the latter part of June his wife ventured out into the yard with the three weeks' old baby, her Irish neighbor, Mrs. Maguire, who lived on the floor below, rushed up and began showering compliments at her and cooing to the tiny youngster.

"And what be ye calling him, Mrs. Conrad?" she asked, all smiles.

"Fer-di-" Anna started to pronounce the name slowly.

"Freddy," Mrs. Maguire snapped, giving her no chance to finish. She was familiar with her German neighbor's linguistic failings. Anna was frequently misplacing her vowels and splitting her English words into syllables. The Irish woman took it for granted that it was Freddy that Mrs. Conradi had meant to say.

"Freddy," Mrs. Maguire went on with enthusiasm; "that's a fine American name. I'm glad. I was afraid you might name him Fritz or Hans or some other foreign name which is no good in this country. But Freddy is a nice name. I have a nephew by that name, Fred O'Rourke. He is a roundsman for this district, as fine a police officer as you ever saw."

Mrs. Maguire's two little girls, who for some time had

vainly sought to gain their mother's eye, could restrain their hankering no longer and began pulling her apron and asking that they be allowed to see the baby. Mrs. Conradi was pleased by the eagerness of the children. Radiating good nature, she lifted the bonnet to show the whole of the child's face and head.

"There, that's little Freddy," Mrs. Maguire was saying to her youngsters with a benign voice and look, as if in giving the name of the infant she was making a present of something very precious to the little girls.

It was this offhand christening of the infant by the Irish woman that in the course of events was to take precedence over the solemn naming of the child by his father on that memorable Sunday afternoon. Neither Ferdinand, which Anna tried to call her infant, nor Lassalle, which Gottfried insisted on calling him, could hold their own beside the brief, crisp, buoyant, "American" Freddy. For Freddy, like everything else that emanated from Mrs. Maguire, at once came to stand in Mrs. Conradi's mind for the Americanized version of her son's German name. True, when alone with her child, when holding her baby close to her breast, or when crooning him to sleep, Anna would speak to him in German, call him Fritzchen and Fritzi and Fritzli. These German diminutives went so well with her German songs and lullabies, they went well with her overflowing maternal emotions. But in the yard, in the street, to her neighbors, to the strange American world in which she now lived, in which she was trying to fit, her infant son was Freddy, Fred.

And to fit into her surroundings Anna was trying hard — much harder than her husband. She had to. She was in fact living in a different world from that in which her husband lived. *Kleindeutschland,* as the district in which they lived was facetiously called, to Gottfried literally was a *Little*

Germany. He worked with Germans. In the cigar factories only an occasional English word or phrase crept in, the rest was all German. At the meetings he attended German was spoken. To Anna, on the other hand, *Kleindeutschland* was largely a misnomer. Even in the tenements which were supposed to constitute the heart of Little Germany, the Irish tenants were still in the majority. The exodus of the Irish from the district was not to come for a few years yet. Mrs. Conradi was constantly compelled to acquire new English words and phrases, to add new sentences, new combinations to her small linguistic collection. When no one was about she would even venture to speak English to her baby.

One Sunday morning as she was busying herself preparing a bottle for the child it began to cry.

"In a minute, Freddy dear," she sang out cheerily. Her husband heard this.

"Where do you get this *Freddy* from?" Gottfried asked, irritated. "His name is Ferdinand Lassalle."

"Freddy — that is English," his wife said with a ravishing smile. The wrinkles disappeared from Gottfried's brow. She was so much of a child herself still; she was so irresistible, his Anna.

He made no further remonstrance against her calling their child Freddy, but he thought about it often in the weeks and months that followed. He also began to pay more attention to the progress his wife was making in the acquisition of the English language and customs. He noted the appearance of several distinctly American trinkets in the house. Her Irish neighbors were reshaping Anna's mind. At times he was amazed at the flexibility of her tongue and vocal organs. Anna was pronouncing with the ease of a native English words that to him felt like a disagreeable mouthful.

In the midst of such brooding, Gottfried once caught sight

of himself in the mirror and was not a little shocked by his appearance. His face was stern. There was no trace of the boy in him and yet he was scarcely twenty-four. His wife, though only two years younger than himself, looked like a little girl beside him. His mustache had come up rapidly of late and was giving him a much older appearance.

Gottfried's habit of persistent reasoning soon crystallized his vague uneasiness into a definite fear. He was fearing in all seriousness for his Lassalle (in his thoughts Gottfried always called his infant Lassalle). He feared the influence of the Irish neighbors and even of Anna herself upon the child. Anna was young and was Americanizing so fast. She would carry the child along with her; that was to be expected. But would she not carry him too far? It would be terrible to have barriers between himself and his son, barriers of language or thought. He and his Lassalle must be as one. They were to be companions. The boy was to be a man after his own heart — not narrow, not clannish.

He was constantly running up against "American narrowness and clannishness." The New World was so intolerant of the newcomer. It was forever trying to remodel him, to pattern him after its own fashion, after its own likes and whims.

He was himself being made the victim of this intolerance by the New World. Thus his name Conradi was now being mutilated, wiped off. Again Mrs. Maguire was at the root of it. She would not bother with suffixes and insisted on addressing her German neighbor as Mrs. Conrad. Just then gas was introduced into their row of tenements. Mrs. Maguire, as always, made herself the spokesman for her German neighbor and gave the name to the gasman as Conrad. That was decisive. Letters now began to come, and advertisements, all addressed to Conrad. For a while these things

infuriated Gottfried. Then his anger gave way to grief. It simply had to be so — the New World would have its way.

Little by little the name Conradi joined the name Lassalle in the realm of family heirlooms. Only among his intimates, the charter members of the Freidenkerverein and the like was Gottfried still addressed and put down on the books by that name. In everyday life he had, like his wife and son, become a Conrad.

While Gottfried Conrad frequently upbraided America, he was himself yielding to the New World far more than he suspected. A strange restlessness was coming over him, a restlessness that was American in spirit, American in its quickness, energy and enterprise. It was part of the same restlessness and zeal which at the time was spurring on thousands of men both natives and immigrants to heroic pursuits of wealth, fortunes, possessions; part of the spirit which was building railroads that were to span the country from coast to coast and was dotting the broad prairies of the far west with cities and hamlets.

This spirit which Chicago was expressing with "I will" and which others had expressed with "Pike's Peak or Bust," this spirit of turbulent energy had seized Conrad and his group of Lassalleans, and was given expression in a fiercely vigorous agitation they were carrying on against capitalism, against the church, against their employers. In a short time they organized the "Arbeiter Liedertafel," the "Spread Light Society," the "German Workingmen's Sick Benefit Society." They were now planning the establishment of a German weekly that was to spread the ideas of socialism. Heinrich Kolb was breaking ground for the paper.

Conrad, while cooperating with Kolb in the plans for a socialist weekly, was carrying on single-handed an agitation for a subject in which he had suddenly developed a great

interest — cremation. He was agitating among his countrymen for the establishment of a "German Cremation Society." The agitation for such a society was only another phase of Conrad's unremitting hatred of *Pfaffenthum.* What greater blow could be given the church than to eliminate its potency in one of its important fields — burial!

While Gottfried was ardently addressing audiences of German immigrants on the benefits of cremation, pointing out to them how much more scientific, more progressive, it was to burn the dead than to bury them in the fashion prescribed by the church, his wife was making ready to receive a new life. Anna was expecting another baby. The child, a boy, came as Freddy was rounding out his second year.

In her heart Anna was trembling lest the coming of the boy spur Gottfried to a repetition of the scene on the Sunday when he named and dedicated little Freddy. But she was spared this. A few days before the arrival of the baby, trouble broke out in the shop where Gottfried worked. A new system of dividing up the work had been installed and this sliced off the wages of Gottfried and a number of other men by a dollar and a quarter a week. It was five or six weeks before the difference was finally adjusted. Under these circumstances Gottfried was in no mood for celebration. The infant was quietly named Henry, Conrad letting slip an occasion for a fresh onslaught on the church and *Pfaffenthum.* Anna was much relieved over this and guarded against saying or doing anything that might bring up even an allusion to the subject.

In after years Freddy frequently tried to recall the details of the accident to his little brother, but could not. With

regard to the first events of the catastrophe his mind was a blank. What he did have a vivid recollection of was a blinding flash of terror and intelligence that in a moment destroyed the fairyland of childhood in which he lived, and bared his vision to the gray world of realities which he was to know henceforth.

This inability to recall the first details of the accident that doomed little Henry, an accident for which he was unwittingly responsible, annoyed Freddy all the more because he did remember things that happened months previous to the accident. He recalled, for instance, the winter mornings when he would wake to the pricking odor of what he later came to recognize as smoke and before opening his eyelids would call, "Mama!" A fumbling like that of one getting up would follow and he would feel his mother's arms about him. She would take him into her bed and snuggle him up close to her. He recalled her kisses and caresses, her soft arm upon which he loved to put his cheek and dream with eyes shut. He recalled how after a time he would open his eyes, would meet the ecstatic gaze of his mother, would ask where Papa was, and how Mother would pucker her lips in imitation of his own, and would tell him that Father had gone to work long since.

All this which had taken place at least five months prior to the accident to little Henry he recalled, but for a picture of the terrible moment of wreck and ruin to his brother and to his family he could go only to his mother's incoherent memories. It was evening. Father had gone to a meeting. Anna recalled that she had neglected her breakfast for the next day. She could not wait until her husband's return, Gottfried would come too late. So she entrusted little Henry to him, to Freddy, warned him to look sharp after his little brother and he promised to do so. She was back in a trice

— but the thing had happened. The yard was filled with screaming women and children. One of them was holding little Henry. The child looked in the distance like a red ball. He had fallen a flight and a half of stairs to the basement, was covered with blood from head to foot and was unconscious.

From then on Freddy recalled things distinctly. He remembered the horror in his father's face; for Gottfried had been called back from the meeting by one of the neighbors. He recalled the sobs and hand-wringing of his mother, the tense face of the physician and the hoarse gasps of his little brother. His father was holding the lamp, his mother a candle. Lamp and candle were moved about in conformity with the orders of the physician, who was concentrating the light now on one, now on another part of the child's body which he was tapping and sounding.

At this point his memory was a trifle blurred. But he recalled distinctly the visits of the physician in the weeks that followed. A window sill had been set aside for medicines. Upon it were heaped small porcelain jars and bottles, gauze, bandages, cotton. The house smelled of medicine. Mother moved about the house like a shadow, weeping, always weeping. Father stayed home evenings now. But he seldom played with or even talked to him. Only once after days and days in which he seemed to have completely forgotten his little son did Gottfried take Freddy on his knees. The child was overcome with happiness. He took hold of a button on his father's vest and drew Gottfried's attention to himself.

"Are you angry, Papa?" Freddy asked. He had often heard his mother speak so to Gottfried.

His father was fairly lifted out of his chair by the question. "No, my son, I am not angry," he answered

Freddy leaned his cheek against his father's shoulder and lay quiet for a long time.

Once Freddy observed his mother holding his little brother in her lap and studying him with mournful eyes. It occurred to him that he had not seen little Henry walk in a long time.

"Why don't he walk, Mama?" he asked.

Anna answered through tears. "He can't walk; he is sick."

"He is sick," the child repeated; "why is he sick?"

"Because he injured his spine."

"Oh," said he, as if this cleared matters, and he rushed to the window to watch the rain beat against the panes.

Several days later Freddy came up to where little Henry lay and began telling him a story. He made noises and gestures, the kind of noises and gestures that ordinarily would set his little brother giggling and clapping his hands, but there was no response from the child now, not an exclamation, not a sound. Freddy turned to his mother.

"Why don't he laugh, Mama?"

"He can't laugh." Anna swallowed hard.

"Because he injured his spine," he said, half questioning, half explaining.

Anna drew him up to her and clasped him in her arms.

One day as Freddy was sitting on the floor playing, little Henry emitted a strange cry. Freddy looked up at his mother with a frightened, questioning gaze. It was not his little brother's wonted cry. It was more like the lowing of a little beast in pain. Anna noticed the expression in her son's face and turned aside to wipe her tears.

The doctor was agonizingly indefinite about the child's condition. Would little Henry get well? He might; such things happen. How soon might he get well? That he

could not tell; no one could. Would the child be in this imbecile condition a year? Oh, yes, surely. Might he remain in that state for many years? He might. Might he never recover from it? That, too, was likely.

Conrad now owed the doctor a considerable bill and the physician ceased calling. He was to be summoned only in case the child became violently ill, or something out of the ordinary happened. Otherwise there was no need of a physician.

No sooner had the doctor's visits ceased, however, than Anna began making the rounds of dispensaries. Twice and three times a week she would visit various free clinics, in spite of the wet, drizzly fall days. Freddy invariably accompanied her on these journeys. She could not leave him alone in the house. Besides, the boy was a real help to her now that little Henry had become a "lump of flesh," as Anna often sobbed to herself.

Gottfried would listen to his wife's tales of what the doctors had to say about little Henry in silence. He was a little afraid of Anna — afraid that she might break down. She had become worn and unstrung. He spent much time home now, brooding. Remorse was gnawing at him. Anna never reproached him, but he felt that he was largely, if not entirely, responsible for the injury to his child. Of course accidents would happen. Still had he stayed home that evening, his child might have been well; they might all have been spared that misfortune.

Little Henry apparently was none the worse off for being dragged about by his mother. He was eating well and getting stouter, heavier. But there was not the slightest sign of a return of intelligence into his vacant face and eyes.

The fall passed and Christmas came. Conrad was fond of Christmas in spite of his irreligion. It was such a

"gemüthlicher" holiday, it was so filled with memories of home and childhood and happy bygone days. It was to him the least churchly of all church holidays. But there was next to no celebration at the Conrad home that Christmas. There was no holiday spirit in the house.

Mrs. Conrad left off going to dispensaries during the holidays. But the first week in January she not only went herself with the child, but insisted that Gottfried, who was not working that week, go along with her to a hitherto untried clinic. He went, and when he remained alone with the physician he implored him for the truth about his child. He was ready to face anything, Gottfried assured him. The doctor would make no out and out prediction. He hinted, however, that "in such cases death is frequently the greatest specialist." Gottfried tried hard to meet his wife with a look of feigned unconcern.

The women in the tenement house were now in frequent communication with Anna. They brought her news of every specialist or professor they heard about. They brought her stories of cases similar to her own. Anna's head would become dizzy from the description of diseases and the sickening details of suffering. It would seem to her at times as if the whole world were a huge hospital and that her share of misery and suffering were indeed light beside the horrifying agonies her neighbors and friends described.

She could not of course think of visiting the specialists and professors the women told her about, because they charged such prohibitive prices, but she longed to visit them, especially one, a Dr. Homer Blakely, concerning whom she heard much. But Dr. Blakely, it was said, charged twenty-five dollars a visit. So that was out of the question.

One day in March the neighbor who had been indefatigable in her stories about Dr. Blakely fairly flew into the Conrad

flat, so eager was she to impart the good news. Dr. Blakely could be seen free. Yes, twice a week the professor was at the Mount Horeb hospital. He was there only an hour and there were hundreds waiting every time to see him. He was there from ten to eleven. But if Mrs. Conrad meant to see him she would have to be at the hospital at eight o'clock in the morning.

Anna's eyes lighted up at this news. She would be there at eight o'clock; she would be there long before eight. And she was — the following Friday.

It was a cold, biting morning, one of those mornings which give the month of March the characterization of coming in like a lion. But this did not deter her. While his father was eating breakfast, she woke Freddy up and dressed him by lamplight. Then she got busy with the invalid, wrapping little Henry up tightly and securely. Before starting she looked Freddy over again. She thought she had him dressed amply warm for the ride. But she was unaware of the long walk there was between the street-car and the hospital dispensary. When she was still several blocks from the hospital, little Freddy's hands were numb and the tears were freezing on his cheeks. He cried bitterly. The invalid, too, began a series of awful shrieks. The wind and sleet cut Mrs. Conrad's bare wrist, but she would not for a minute relinquish Freddy's hand. Thus, holding one child to her bosom and dragging the other one, she finally reached the hospital. Breathlessly she sank on the first bench she saw. It was not yet 7:30. Attracted by the cries of the two children, an attendant came out, a middle-aged man. He was accustomed to such sights, but not so early in the morning. This must be a desperate case, he thought, and departed for the moment from his cold, official manner. He took hold of Freddy and rubbed his stiff fingers back first to

pain and then to relief. Anna was doing all she could to quiet little Henry.

The attendant took in the strange sound the child was making, looked at him and then at Anna and said nothing.

"I want to see Professor Blakely," Anna began as soon as the children were quieted. "I must see him. I beg you to let me see him." Her misfortune had for one of its results the acquirement by Anna of a sharper, better command of English. She simply had to elbow her way through the English language as she had to do it through the crowds in the dispensaries if she were to get anywhere.

"Yes, yes," the attendant sought to quiet her, "you shall see him. You shall see him first," he added as he was leaving the room. Several other hospital attachés came into the room one by one in the next hour and a half. All eyed Mrs. Conrad and her invalid curiously and all were nice to Freddy. Meantime the waiting-room was rapidly filling up with patients. They were talking under their breath, whispering. All eyes were fixed on the door leading to the inner room. Finally it opened. An attendant looked over the crowd and disappeared again inside the closed door. He came out a moment later, went half way across the room and motioned Mrs. Conrad to follow him. Anna's heart stood still.

In spite of Dr. Blakely's attempted smile every time he looked at her or asked a question, Anna was trembling. She felt that she was in the presence of a man who was different from all the doctors she had visited. The others were so sure and brief. Dr. Blakely seemed utterly undecided. He was taking Mrs. Conrad into his confidence, was asking her opinion, seemed to be seeking her approbation, as if she too were a doctor. There was no gruffness in his voice, he made no attempt at showing authority. On the contrary, he

seemed apologetic, and acted as if he felt guilty of something. She could have cried out, could have thrown herself at the man's feet and begged him to save her son. If he could not save him, no one could. But she controlled herself. She was afraid to make the least disturbance. The physician's eyes had become so thoughtful.

The examination of the child by the Yankee doctor indeed was not a superficial one. Little Henry was undressed and the physician's fingers traveled over every limb. Then came various probes and sounds. He looked into his ears and eyes, pulled back the hair from his forehead and observed it for a long time.

Then, while the nurses were tending to the invalid, the physician turned to little Freddy. He tickled the youngster under the chin and a smile spread over Dr. Blakely's clean-shaven face, a kindly, grandfatherly smile.

"I have a little grandson who is just your age," he was telling Freddy. "You want to come and play with him?"

Freddy did not answer. The tears were fast gathering in Anna's eyes. Dr. Blakely turned his attention to her. He began asking questions, what dispensaries she had been going to, how often she went. She answered quickly. Once she got her tenses badly mixed. A faint smile flickered over the physician's face. He asked how long she had been in the country, where she came from. The Rhine? Oh, yes, he knew the Rhine very well, liked it; tramped through the whole Rhine country as a student. He dropped into German so simply and naturally that Mrs. Conrad hardly noticed the change of language.

He was warning her not to go out on such cold days to dispensaries. It might make little Freddy ill. And she, too, was not overly strong, and not overly well dressed. She must be careful. She was apt to catch cold. . . . He was

sidestepping the real issue, Anna felt. He was hedging. He did not wish to speak to her about little Henry.

"But, Herr Doktor," she broke in excitedly, "what about my child — will he get well? Will he, Doctor? I — I cannot stand it any longer."

Her thin frame was trembling with sobs. Dr. Blakely spoke. He urged her to calm herself, to control her feelings. She must not take it so hard. She had another child to look after, her little boy there. She must spare her health for his sake. Besides, she was still so young, she would have other children, many children, nice children like little Freddy. . . . He smiled.

She recovered her self-possession in an instant. The doctor's words sounded so strange. Was her child going to die?

Dr. Blakely regarded her for a moment. Finally he spoke: "No, not so soon."

"He will die, he will die," she mumbled, a hunted look coming into her eyes.

The doctor was looking at little Freddy and seemed to weigh something in his mind. The child was dressed in a coat of cheap, shoddy material. His patched shoes, the flannel pants and waist he wore, his mittens, all were unequal to the rigors of the weather outside. And he spoke to Mrs. Conrad. He spoke with the same attitude and feeling with which he was wont to plunge the scalpel deeper and deeper into a wound, knowing that that way alone lay relief and safety.

"Liebe Frau," he said, speaking in German to her, "you must not forget that you have another child to look after. You must save your health for him and for yourself, for your future children. There is no use in my leading you on with false hopes. You might as well face the truth and

save your energy, save tramping to dispensaries in such weather. Your child will never be well. There is only one way out for cases like this — death. Doctors can do nothing for it. It is entirely in the hands of nature. Nature may sometimes work out a cure in spite of the physician's diagnosis. Such cures, however, are not frequent. His brain has been disturbed and his spine is injured. There is nothing to be done for him but to make his lot as easy as possible as long as he is with us."

She was sobbing. The nurse was dressing the invalid. The physician walked up and down the room a few times, then stood directly in front of Mrs. Conrad. His gray hair had been disturbed. The rings under his eyes were showing with marked prominence. He never liked such scenes. They aged one.

"This," he said, looking at the sad, helpless woman before him, "this, my dear woman, is a time to show your Christian fortitude. Brace up."

She had a long day for tears and moans so that they were well spent by the time her husband came home for supper. As soon as Gottfried saw his wife's face he knew that something had happened. He looked at Freddy. The child was sitting at the table awaiting his father. Little Henry lay in his crib asleep. All was seemingly as usual, but something had happened. He sensed it clearly.

They ate in silence. Gottfried did not take his eyes off Freddy during the meal. He kept asking him whether he wanted more of this or that. But the boy did not have much of an appetite that evening. When the meal was finished, Gottfried asked:

"What did the doctor say?"

Anna pretended not to hear him. She did not wish to

speak in Freddy's presence. She rose and walked over to where little Henry lay sleeping and stood at the foot of the child's bed. Gottfried followed and stood beside her.

"What did the doctor say?" he asked as he put his arm about her waist. Anna bent her face and head lower.

"He said," she spoke with a throat that was filling with tears, "he said, this is the time to show Christian fortitude."

Gottfried lifted his eyes from his wife's heaving shoulders and stared at the sleeping child in the crib. Six years of idiocy had made their entry into the Conrad home.

CHAPTER III

THE WEB OF LIFE

WITH the definite realization that their child was a hopeless idiot, there settled over the Conrad household a subdued quiet. Had little Henry died Gottfried would not have been wanting in words of consolation for himself and for his wife. Little Freddy was still too young to have a sustained impression of the tragedy.

But of what avail could words be when the child was there, lying in the crib, or sitting humped together in an improvised chair, a mass of vegetating tissue, with a hopeless, idiotic gaze and a voice like that of a bullock? Gottfried could endure pain, torture, death, if it only came with a violent rush. The slow, torturesome agony of helplessness was driving him mad. When he woke in the morning and went about his ablutions he would try hard to avoid chancing his gaze upon little Henry as he lay in the crib. When he returned from work in the evening he maintained a sullen silence. He had not lost his sensitiveness for his wife. On the contrary, it was this very sensitiveness for her suffering and torture that was turning him into a bear. The dull gaze of the invalid was turning the house into a torture chamber for him, and Gottfried fled.

He fled to his societies. He sought relief in consuming activity in the various socialist and labor organizations. Gottfried, who leaped from one impulse to another, was now

slighting his wife. He brought his wages home, to be sure, but not himself. He spent little time in the house. Anna saw the change that was coming over her husband, but she had been too much battered and beaten by misfortune to have energy left for consecutive thought or contemplation. She was devoting herself to her invalid and to Freddy with passion and tenderness; to the invalid because he was helpless, because he was no longer of this world but was merely lingering on before taking his departure; and to Freddy because he was her hope for the future and companion for the present. The boy was bright, sensitive, and was compensating her for many hurts and neglects by his father.

But Gottfried hardened in a measure also toward Freddy. Time and again when his five-year-old son would come up to his father for a word or caress, Gottfried would speak to him or touch him grudgingly. His sense of justice, which he carried to extremes at all times and on all occasions, would tell him that a caress for Freddy might indeed be a discrimination which little Henry, were he in possession of his faculties, would resent. So little Freddy came to depend more and more upon his mother. He clung to Anna with all the fervor of his sensitive and neglected heart.

Time and events combined to make it easy for Gottfried to neglect his home and family and yet not incur any reproaches in doing so from Anna or even from his own conscience. For Conrad was in great demand these days. There was a quickening of activity among the German workmen in New York and in America generally. Immigration from the fatherland had increased and most of the newcomers were workingmen. Some of them had belonged to Lassalle's organization in the Old World; others were members of Karl Marx's recently formed Internationale. The Germans in New York were now organizing in trade unions.

Grievances were discussed, ultimatums to employers decided upon, strikes planned.

Another event that stirred the German colony to its foundations was the appearance in America of Karl Marx's work "Das Kapital." The book had already been accepted by the socialists of Europe as their gospel. Its appearance in New York had transformed over night the halls and barrooms of Little Germany into popular forums for the discussion of surplus value, rents and profits. Scores of clubs had sprung up for the systematic study of the treatise. Conrad was a zealous student of the book and among the first to master it.

The interest in Karl Marx's book was still at white heat when the panic of 1873 set in. There were thousands of unemployed walking about the streets of New York City, hungry. The approaching rigors of the winter made their sufferings even more acute. Protest meetings, demonstrations, parades were held. At each of these Conrad was in the forefront as the orator of the day. There were other speakers in the colony, but none of them had the earnestness and convincingness of Gottfried Conrad. His friends, the Lassalleans with Heinrich Kolb at the head, noticed that. Conrad had indeed grown in the half-dozen years since he left Germany. No one could drive an argument or a picture home to the workingman so well as he. To Kolb, who would sit on the same platform with him, it would often seem as if Gottfried was pouring out his own heavy heart to his listeners; as if he were baring his own cruel fate and bitter disappointment to them. His sympathy and understanding of suffering and tragedy were almost divine. His sincerity and directness savored of the apostles. Kolb watched Conrad with pride. He was not deceived in him. Gottfried had more than come up to his expectations. He was indeed a

great orator — the best socialist speaker among the Germans in New York. His, Kolb's, teachings and influence had fallen on fertile soil. . . .

"Nun Ja, der Conrad!" the listeners would say to each other — and that explained it all. That was just exactly what they expected of him. Conrad's reputation as a scourger of oppression had for some time been definitely accepted.

But the vehemence which marked Gottfried Conrad on the platform was beginning to find expression in his personal relations with people and especially with his family. He had always been somewhat autocratic; he was becoming more and more so now without noticing it. Anna watched her husband with sad eyes. Gottfried was growing quarrelsome, hard and domineering. There was a set, elderly expression about his face now, despite the fact that he was not yet thirty. His long, sandy mustache framed a mouth that had lost nearly all of the tender sensitiveness that endeared him to her back in Germany, that made him such a wonderful lover there.

Sometimes on a Sunday Conrad would sit home and read. But no longer as in the past was he calling Anna to read her a love story in the paper or to tell her an anecdote. His reading now was as gray as his life. At least such was the impression the books and pamphlets he devoured made upon Anna. She found them full of figures. They read for all the world like a tradesman's bill.

Anna's sadness was taking on a tinge of self-pity. When Freddy was out playing in the yard, she would often sit by the window and cry. She was lonely. Friends and neighbors were all right in their place. But now she needed more than friends. She needed Gottfried — his sympathy, his love and caresses. She was expecting another baby. And

while Gottfried was considerate and relieved her of much work, she sought his eyes for something more than mere consideration, but she did not find it there. Gottfried was too embittered.

In August the child came, a little girl. But she died at the end of three weeks. There was an epidemic in the district at the time and the child succumbed to it. The birth and death of the child made a fleeting impression upon the Conrad household. It was soon again in its accustomed rut — with a slight deviation.

Freddy, who was now six years old, started school and there was no one to help her with Henry during the day. The invalid child had developed a ravenous appetite, and his paralytic body with its large head, curved back, and face of leaden hue, was taking on much flesh. In her still delicate condition she could no longer lift or carry him without doing violence to her own health.

Not to deprive little Henry, however, of his wonted airing, Mrs. Conrad contrived a new scheme. As soon as Freddy came back from school they would take him up on the roof of the house together and keep him there the rest of the afternoon, and even a good part of the evening.

It was less than a half-dozen blocks from the tenement in which the Conrad family lived to the East River. In the late afternoon and evening during the few weeks before fall set in, the breeze from the river would make the roof of the tenement a delightful place. After supper, when Conrad would go away to his meetings, she would go up to the roof, spread out a blanket and lie down with little Freddy, the invalid lying on one side of them. Mother and son would talk together as they watched the city become studded with electric lights, and listened to the whistles of steamers, or gazed at the stars in silence. These few fall evenings and his

mother's face remained bound together in Freddy's memory to his dying day.

From the roof they had a view of several of the big sky-scrapers on one side. On the other side towered the steeple of a church. The church was blocks away, but the gold-roofed steeple seemed near, especially after dark. In the evening it would often seem to Freddy that he needed but to walk over to the edge of the roof and he could touch the steeple.

Once Freddy asked his mother why they were not going to church; all the people he knew were. Anna gave him the best answer she could think of, and the child forgot the subject. He came back to it, however, some evenings later.

"Mama," he asked, "are we foreigners?"

Anna studied his little face in the moonlight. "Why do you ask this?" she said finally.

"'Cause Jackie Carroll says we are foreigners 'cause we don't go to church."

"Is that what he says?" She tried to draw him out.

"Yes," said Freddy, enthusiastic over his mother's interest. "Jackie says his mother says all them foreigners are bad people. They don't pray at the table and don't go to church."

Anna was silent.

"Why don't we never go to church, Mama?" Freddy came back with the question that never was satisfactorily answered. "Is it 'cause you got to tend to baby?" They were calling their invalid "baby."

"Yes," she said, not knowing what answer to make.

"Then why don't Papa take me to church? Lots of children go to church with their papas."

"When you are a big boy you will know," Mrs. Conrad replied, and Freddy wondered why he could not know now.

But he did not wonder too long. A moment later he was asking her about the stars and where they came from, and why God had chosen to live in heaven. In spite of the fact that the word God was never mentioned by Conrad, and that he forbade his wife to mention it in his child's presence, Freddy had picked up all sorts of words and phrases about God and heaven and was trying to construct the fragments of information into one whole, into a something that would have logic and would not puzzle his childish brain.

Mrs. Conrad, who had been thinking to herself while her little son was rambling, suddenly said to him as if in response to a question:

"No, you are not a foreigner, my child — you are an American. Papa and I were born in the old country, but you were born right here in New York. You are an American; you are as good an American as Jackie Carroll or anybody else. Americans too don't go to church if they don't want to. You don't have to go to church if you don't wish to."

Anna had not at all been converted to her husband's free-thinking views. She approved of them no more than ever. But she would not let any one hold these views against him and especially against her child. It was just such questions that she feared during those weeks immediately following Freddy's birth when she was pleading with Gottfried to have the child baptized. She would shield her son, however, against such annoyances, she would shield him to the best of her ability.

Freddy had studied the decisive mien of his mother for some time, then came back at her trying to make sure.

"I'm not a foreigner *nohow?*" he asked.

A glint of merriment came into Anna's eyes. She replied, "You are not a foreigner, nohow; you are an American."

The boy was quiet for a long time. He was thinking.

Two days later Freddy ran up the stairs in the afternoon with several ugly scratches on his face and wrists. His waist was torn and one ear was dirt-covered, as if he had rolled on the ground.

"Did you fight again?" Anna asked anxiously.

"Yes," he said quietly.

"With whom?"

"With Jackie," he replied, and dropped his monosyllabic tone. There was a glow in his eyes, a glow of triumph. He continued, fairly shouting as he spoke, "I bit him and I punched him and then I kicked him in the stomach."

"'Why did you do this?" His mother glowered at him. Mrs. Carroll was a neighbor of hers whom she did not especially like. She was one of the old Irish tenants in the neighborhood. The invasion of the district by German immigrants had caused an exodus of the Irish. Mrs. Carroll resented this and she "made the dutchies feel it," as she expressed it. She was a quarrelsome neighbor; Mrs. Conrad always avoided her.

"I warned you," Anna chid her son, "not to play with Jackie and not to fight with him."

"I did not begin it," burst out Freddy; "he did. He said I was a foreigner and I was no Christian, and called me names, and there was a lot of children about and they laughed. Then I punched him and I rolled him on the ground and I kicked him until he cried. I did not cry; I won't —" and he broke out in stifling sobs.

Freddy's starting school brought about a significant change in the Conrad household. It brought Gottfried back to his family with remarkable suddenness. The wound caused by the misfortune to little Henry was not healed, but it was not

festering. Both Gottfried and his wife were becoming reconciled to their fate — their son's fate. Conrad had calmed down. He could now look at his invalid son, go up to him and try to make him comfortable. His paternal feelings for the child were dulled. Whenever his thoughts turned on the future, on his family, he saw only Freddy.

Conrad did not curtail his activity in the union and various socialist organizations to which he belonged, but his heart was home once more, things in the house resumed a cheerfulness which had not been there since that fatal evening of the accident nearly two and a half years back. The holiday feeling would be introduced at supper when Gottfried would open a conversation with Freddy about school and his teachers. Gottfried was taking his six-year-old son seriously now. So far Freddy was the only prop upon which his house, the House of Conrad, was to rest. Gottfried looked sharp after the progress the boy was making in his studies, in his surroundings. He was more than ever on guard now lest his son be torn from him, torn by a training, by a psychology and point of view which would have nothing in common with his. He was determined to *keep* his son. There must be no gap between them. Of course, Freddy was an American: English was his native language. But why could not Freddy think in English that which his father was thinking in German? The theories and ideals for which he, Gottfried, stood, which he preached, were universal. They were international. Socialism was preaching the brotherhood of men and nations. That he must make clear to the boy, with that his son must become inoculated. There should be no difference in thought between him and his son even if a difference in tongues could not be avoided.

Of course Gottfried had no intention of talking socialism to his six-year-old son; that would be ridiculous. But he

determined to look after his mental and moral bringing up otherwise. Among the socialist tracts he had read there were several which contained interesting information about the growth of the child's mind and habits of thought. These Conrad read and reread and now proceeded to put them into practise. His son was to grow into a socialistic viewpoint. He would not let his boy out of his sight.

The struggles which Freddy went through because the Conrad family was not going to church did not escape Gottfried's keen eye. This, in spite of the fact that Anna never mentioned such things to him. She carefully refrained from narrating to her husband the various questions little Freddy asked her during the beautiful fall evenings they spent on the roof. But Gottfried suspected these things. He had reason to. Twice or three times he caught Freddy making remarks which showed that the subject of religion had been discussed somewhere, possibly in school. Once Freddy asked his father whether he could go to Sunday-school. Teacher was telling him about it. All the other children went.

"You better wait," said Conrad. "Soon we shall have a Sunday-school of our own."

Freddy did not seem pleased by it, or overly interested in the Sunday-school that was to be. But he submitted without further protest.

At the very next meeting of the Freidenkerverein Conrad got up and spoke at length about the need of a Sunday-school for the children of the free-thinking German immigrants. There were by this time more than a dozen married men in the society and they heartily approved Conrad's suggestion. Conrad did not come empty-handed to the meeting. He had several newspaper clippings and a little pamphlet telling of

the work which Free-thinking Germans in the West were doing in that direction.

A committee was appointed to get in touch with these Western Germans and to see how far they had progressed with their free-thought schools and instruction. The greater part of the winter was consumed in correspondence. In March a program and course of study were finally agreed upon. The first Sunday in April the Sunday-school that was "to train children as future soldiers in the army of the brotherhood of man, freedom and equality" was to open.

Conrad and Kolb supplemented each other in outlining the course of study. The word "God" was eliminated and "Nature" was substituted for it. The children were to be taught reason and human dignity — *Vernunft und Menschliche Werde.* They were to be taught pure morals and ethics — *Reine Moral und Sittlichkeit.* Instead of being taught the miracles of the Bible, they were to be taught the wonders of science. Precepts of humanity were to take the place of the catechism of religion.

The long awaited Sunday came. Gottfried himself took his little son to Sunday-school. The school was housed in the hall where the Freidenkerverein held its semi-monthly meetings. But the hall had been specially adorned for the occasion. Several new pictures were added to those already on the walls. Across from the picture of Ferdinand Lassalle there now hung a picture of Alexander von Humboldt. A supposed likeness of Copernicus was hung next to that of the agitator Weitling. Across the length of the wall, which faced the audience, freshly painted was the legend *Und Sie Bewegt Sich Doch.*

The preceptor was a young German student who had recently arrived from the Old World. He did not speak a

word of English. He made an introductory speech which the parents present fully approved, and were even enthusiastic over. But little Freddy and the half-dozen other boys and girls who were present understood scarcely a word. They sat wondering what it was all about. The first session of the Sunday-school was a disappointment to them. They had heard from other children what their Sunday-school was like. They had seen the children come home from school laughing, chatting, happy. But there was nothing here to make one happy.

The didactic tone of the young student and the evident lack of interest on the part of the children made Conrad uneasy. He could not exactly say how and where the fault lay, but there was something wrong with the school. He confided his misgivings to Kolb. The latter took a broader outlook.

"The boy," Kolb said, referring to the teacher, "is not at fault. It is a difficult job we have undertaken. The other Sunday-schools, those of the church, have back of them centuries of method, tradition, manners. They have been molded and adapted for generations. They are now second nature with children. Their teachers travel over a beaten track. We, on the other hand, have to build up something, we have to construct something out of our theories. That is no easy matter."

Indeed it was not easy. For six Sundays in succession Gottfried Conrad, in common with several others of the faithful members of the Freidenkerverein, compelled their children to sit through an hour and a half every Sunday morning at the Sunday-school and listen to stupid speeches by the young student. The children conceived during these weeks a hatred not only for the young man, but for the German language in which he was speaking. If the man had only spoken English, perhaps they would have understood him,

perhaps the sessions would have ceased to be such an agonizing boredom!

In the middle of May the experiment was dropped. Kolb and Conrad saw that the school was a failure and their keeping it up was only antagonizing the children. Gottfried was pondering over the lesson the experiment had taught him. He was running up against a stone wall in this struggle of his against the church and priestcraft. The New World would not take his ideas seriously. There was a long struggle ahead of him, a sad, bitter struggle. However, he did not despair. He was young; they, the Lassalleans, were young; and their cause was young, so young. . . . Courage, *nur Muth* and they would get ahead — yes, they would! They had reason on their side and science. Marx's *Capital* was showing plainly that they could not lose! Yes, if Freddy were only bigger and his questions could be answered in grown-up terms. But Freddy was a child and the questions were numerous and annoying.

One day, more than a year later, Freddy suddenly became involved in a quarrel with two boys his own age — eight years. A sister of one of the boys, a girl of ten, took her brother's side against Freddy and called him a liar.

"You are a liar yourself," Freddy replied.

"What if I am?" the girl said archly. "I can lie if I want to, you can't — you *mustn't!*"

"Why?" Freddy queried, perplexed by the odd twist which the quarrel between them had taken.

"Why, why?" the girl mimicked him. "I can lie because I go to church. When I confess that I lied, I am forgiven. All my sins are forgiven. But your sins are never forgiven. When you lie you become more and more wicked. You don't go to church, you have no one to save you. You

and your father and mother are heathens, see! Just like them heathens in the Bible. See!"

Freddy had forgotten the quarrel and ran home to his mother.

"Are we heathens, Mother? Mabel Ryan says we are heathens," he said darkly. "What is a heathen?"

Anna did not quite grasp the significance of her son's question and made him tell her all that had transpired between himself and Mabel.

She was expecting Conrad any moment and made no answer. At the table, before Gottfried had taken a mouthful of food, Freddy rattled off the story to him of his fight with Mabel and her brother which culminated in her calling them all heathens.

Conrad had had a bad day at the shop. Several altercations with the foreman had arisen. This made him unusually weary that evening. He was curt with his son, so curt that Freddy, who was accustomed to have more attention paid to him, was taken aback. He was pained, grieved. Conrad had made no denial that they were heathens. He merely told him not to enter into discussions with foolish girls. Freddy was consumed with rage.

In vain did Gottfried try to placate his son as the meal progressed and his weariness subsided. Freddy ate in silence and slunk out of the house as soon as the meal was finished.

He was raving mad with his father. Mabel's brother had once called his father "Greenhorn" and Freddy had sent the boy home bleeding. But now — now he was himself thinking his father was a greenhorn. Yes, his father was a greenhorn, he was a foreigner, he was a heathen — Mabel was right.

Was she? His fists clenched together. He was boiling

over with rage. He would show them! They couldn't taunt him! He was an American. He was born here. He would teach them a lesson. Just let them come on — come on!

He could not stand still. He had to do something, to give vent to his pent feelings, and ran down the street.

Half-way down the next block he came upon a company of boys his own age who had got hold of a little dog and were tormenting him. They pulled his tail, pinched his ears, dug into his ribs, and howled for joy when the emaciated mongrel showed his teeth.

"What are you torturing that dog for?" Freddy shouted. "It is not your dog." He shoved his way through the crowd, released the mongrel and waited until it was well out of the reach of its captors. Then, putting his hands in his pockets, he swaggered past the group of little boys in silence.

They all gazed at him, but no one seemed to have any desire to respond to his challenging attitude. When he was well to the end of the block Freddy heard derisive laughter and knew it was intended for him. But he was too weary to go back. His craving to fight was gone.

It was dark and his mother had already been looking for him. She wanted to make up to him for the rudeness of his father. She took him in her arms — a thing she had not done in a long while. He wanted to cry, but was ashamed.

CHAPTER IV

AS THE YEARS ROLLED ON

HIS father stood at his bedside fully dressed. His face was tense. Freddy sat bolt upright.

"Mother is ill," Gottfried said with a slight huskiness in his voice. "Better sit by her side while I go for a doctor."

Freddy hurried into his trousers, threw his sweater over his shoulders and slipped into the bedroom. It was two o'clock in the night and his mother was moaning. As he was looking at her, her face suddenly became distorted with pain, her lips began to twitch and tears rolled down her cheeks. He was alarmed and would have screamed, but he recalled that he was alone in the house now, that his father had left him as the guardian of his sick mother, and he mastered his fear.

The contortions and twitching of Anna's face and mouth left as suddenly as they came. She became aware of her son, smiled through her tears and motioned to him to come closer. He sat on the edge of the bed and she drew him to her.

Freddy knew that he ought not to lean his head against his mother, that it must be heavy for her. But he was all tenderness — he could not make a move. What if his mother should die! His father had gone for the doctor. What if this were the last time they two were together, he and his mother. . . . He experienced a great desire to weep, to weep right there on his mother's shoulder. But —

The hand which clasped him had suddenly grown limp.

He rose up quickly. His mother was writhing in pain. She rolled her head like an animal that had been mortally struck. He sprang to his feet. He was trembling. He looked toward the door — If Father only came — His mother, however, was again smiling at him; the paroxysm had subsided.

The waves of pain came and went, their arrival accompanied by spasmodic groans; their receding marked by the weak smiles of his mother.

Vaguely Freddy realized what it was all about. He had heard the neighbors say that his mother would soon give birth to a child. But from that point on he was not clear. He had never thought about the subject before. He wished Father would return. He listened eagerly to every noise. What, were the elevators running at night, too? He was going to ask his mother and checked himself. Then there was a rumbling of a wagon rolling by. Strange that people should be riding so late at night — what business compelled them to? Oh, maybe they were doctors going out to sick people in the middle of the night. . . . Would the doctor, would his father ever come?

His feet were cold. He put them under the quilt and was warm, comfortable. But he had to change his position a bit. He twisted about; he was reclining now. His body was resting on the chair, his feet in his mother's bed. It was great, the warmth delightful. He felt so nice and happy. He swam in a sea of joy. His mother was petting him . . . and she showed him the baby, his little sister. He insisted on carrying her. Mother objected, but he gained his point. He carried his little sister out into the street and showed her to the neighbors' boys. They tickled her and she puckered up her lips and gurgled so funnily. Then he put the little girl in the carriage again and wheeled her — he came down

the street, very haughty, very important. All the children were envying him.

His father was lifting him in his arms. Freddy was awake again but his head was heavy. He saw another man, the doctor, he thought! Gottfried carried him to his bed. He pulled the quilt over his head — he was chilly now. The doctor was calling for hot water. Gottfried got busy with the stove. Freddy heard him remove the covers and then he smelled coffee, and his mother handed him jelly rolls which tasted delicious. . . .

When he woke Freddy heard a shrill little cry coming from the bedroom. A big, fat woman was busying herself about the stove. His father stood in a corner of the room undecided, apparently not knowing what to do with himself.

"Oh, you are up," said Gottfried when he perceived Freddy fully dressed. He cleared a place for him at the table, which was cluttered up with all sorts of things. While Freddy was munching a roll Gottfried poured the coffee.

"Here is some cheese," Conrad said as he shoved a paper in front of his son. He was helpless in domestic matters and felt apologetic. While Freddy was eating, his father went into the bedroom. The woman — Mrs. Miller was her name — was there too. Anna apparently was drowsing. Both Gottfried and Mrs. Miller were looking at a pillow which lay at the foot of the bed. It was from the pillow that the faint cry was coming.

Mrs. Miller came out of the bedroom and Gottfried followed.

"How long do you think he will last?" he asked in a whisper.

"He will be going soon now," Mrs. Miller replied. "They usually last five or six hours when they are born

that early. He is all tired out, poor little one. It'll be a relief to him. But he was a strong little child — what a pity this had happened."

Gottfried stepped back into the bedroom and Freddy saw his father bend over the pillow in which the tiny infant was fighting against death, fighting bravely, as the woman was telling, with his wee little frame that had come into the world prematurely.

Freddy was wondering what all this meant. Why could not his brother live? Why was he born too early? What did it mean anyway? His coffee was getting cold and his cheese lay untouched. Even the jelly roll which Gottfried had laid to one side for him left him indifferent. He was watching his father's every motion. Gottfried stood stooping over the pillow. It seemed to Freddy that his father trembled. It could not be that he was crying?

It was time to go to school and Freddy went down. When he came home to dinner, the pillow he had seen at the foot of the bed in the morning was missing, and with it the shrill, weak cry. His mother was lying in bed apparently asleep, but he heard her moan from time to time. Gottfried tried to look cheerful. He smiled at Freddy several times as he was serving him a delicatessen dinner and urging his son to take a little more of that or the other thing.

Gottfried's smile did not set Freddy at ease, however. He wanted to ask his father about the baby, where it was, what had become of it, when it had died — he felt that it had died — but he was ashamed. Only grown people talked about such things. He ate quickly and ran down the stairs. He lingered longer about the house. Several of the neighbor women asked him about his mother. Was she resting well? None of them mentioned the baby.

He was glad when school was over and he could go home

again. He found his father busying himself with Henry. Gottfried had just fed the invalid and was now adjusting him in a sort of overgrown baby chair in which Henry spent the hours he was not in bed. There was a meekness, a submissiveness about his father's manner which made Freddy uneasy. He was keyed with anxiety.

"Hungry?" Gottfried turned from the invalid, when he had made him comfortable in his chair, to Freddy. He was glad to see him, and he showed it.

Freddy did not answer. He looked at his father in embarrassment. Gottfried's eyes were tender and patient. Freddy was overwhelmed by a sense of tragedy.

His father now settled in a chair and pulled him up to himself by the arm. He took off his son's hat and began to part his hair with his hand in orderly fashion.

"Can I see him?" Freddy gasped.

"See who?" Gottfried asked, gazing steadily at the child. He was wondering whether his son was old enough to be initiated into the mystery of existence.

"The baby — can I see the baby?" Freddy said, as his eyes filled.

"He is gone," said Gottfried, still gazing at him. "He is dead."

The unhappy look that came into the child's eyes unnerved him for the moment. He longed to tell little Freddy that the baby had gone to heaven, whence it came, to play with the angels there. He had been told such stories when he was a child. And death seemed to lose so much of its grimness when one knew that it merely meant going to heaven to play with the angels. . . . It would have been nice to relieve the tragedy in his son's face and eyes by putting such an angelic border about the cold, awful fact of human dissolution. But no! Conrad sobered and purged the thought

from his mind. He must raise his son free of all religious superstitions, no matter how much relief these superstitions afforded. It was hard to deviate from the beaten track. But that was what the free-thinker had to do.

He picked up Freddy and set him on his knee. He smiled at him, talked to him, told him not to worry over the baby. In a year Mother would have another baby, another little brother for him. That other little fellow would be nice. He would not be born too soon and would not die.

Gottfried's words and caresses had the opposite effect upon the child from that intended. Freddy's suppressed emotions burst and swept everything before them. He was shaken with sobs.

Anna heard this and called him weakly. Gottfried led Freddy to her bed. She put her arm about his neck, brought his face close to hers, and kissed his tears away. She did not speak, but the pressure of her hand, her caress, had a quieting effect upon her son. He was himself again. Gottfried lit the gas and began talking about supper.

Mrs. Conrad left the bed at the end of a week, but the next morning, at the urgent advice of the physician, she took to it again. She was not well; her strength was limited, the doctor said, and he proscribed all work and strain for a month. Also she must not worry. There was something in the doctor's attitude and manner of speech which warned Gottfried that things were not well with his wife.

He was home again in the evening now. Often, indeed, he would come an hour earlier from the shop and relieve Anna of whatever work he could. His father's anxiety communicated itself to Freddy. He was at his mother's beck and nod.

As Anna watched her husband and son do much of the

work that normally should be hers, she was frequently overtaken with a longing for home and friends. If her sisters had only been near. But they were all marrying in the Old World and they were marrying into the tradesman class. They and their husbands would never come to America. Her brothers, likewise, had all drifted out of the classes which supplied emigrants to the New World. They were engaged in commercial pursuits. Correspondence with her family was becoming increasingly rare. Soon she would be entirely alone in the New World, except for Freddy and Conrad.

In the midst of these gloomy reflections there stood out like a bright light the changed attitude of Conrad, his kindness toward her, toward his family. It moved her deeply to see Conrad tend to their invalid son, trying to make good to the child, as much as this was possible, the temporary loss of his mother's care. April was drawing to a close and on Sunday Gottfried took the invalid out for an airing. Freddy stayed with his mother, who was still in bed.

The first week in May the doctor permitted Anna to leave her bed. But he warned her against work and strain of any kind. Infractions of these rules would mean that she would have to take to her bed again.

"These miscarriages," the physician said, "sometimes batter a woman up worse than the hardest case of childbirth."

Anna had got off easy, he said. For a while he had feared more serious consequences.

The doctor's predictions were only too true. Anna could not tax her energies in the least. The moment she did so she at once became fagged and exhausted. Her physical fatigue would promptly communicate itself to the brain; and she would become depressed. She was not gaining. Her

skin was assuming a permanent yellow. Her frame, too, was changing. Her formerly straight shoulders now showed a slight stoop. The lines of her body were rapidly disappearing. She was becoming very thin. The girlish waist, which she had retained up to this last childbearing, now seemed to have vanished. She often surveyed herself these days in the mirror ruefully.

His wife's condition troubled Conrad. He, too, longed for a friend with whom he could talk over his domestic worries. But he was too sensitive about letting any of his comrades in arms know of these things. Once, however, his great worry got the better of his pride and he bared his troubles to Heinrich Kolb, who was now editing a socialist weekly, *Der Kampf*. Kolb immediately had an idea. Whatever Mrs. Conrad's condition was, she must at least have good medical attention. She must see a doctor who could be trusted. He knew such a doctor. He was a German, a radical, a forty-eighter. While this physician was not taking part in socialist agitation openly, he had a heart, Kolb said. On the quiet this doctor — Seelenfreund was his name — helped the paper with frequent financial contributions. Dr. Seelenfreund was always ready to help a fellow-countryman in distress. Kolb gave Gottfried a letter to this physician.

With all his kindness and humanity Dr. Seelenfreund could do little for Mrs. Conrad. He too laid stress upon the necessity of good food, plenty of rest, no worry and — time. Time was the main thing. The untimely birth of her child had upset Anna internally, he said. It had that sort of effect upon women sometimes. Such cases did not yield to radical treatment. Time and nature alone were the best remedy. In time she would get stronger. But nature could be greatly assisted by good care and little exertion.

After supper Freddy followed his father into the street. "What did the doctor say?" he asked.

Again Gottfried was debating with himself whether to give his son an evasive answer or to tell him the truth. He decided to tell the truth.

"It will be a long time," he said, "before Mother gets well — it may take a year. In the meantime, we can do a lot to help her get well by letting her do as little work as possible."

A slight twitching ran over Freddy's face. He turned his head away from his father as if attracted by something. In reality he was trying to hide the tears which he could not keep back.

"Run along and play," said Gottfried, and started off, pretending that he was in a hurry to go to the store for his tobacco.

Freddy went around the block. In front of a blacksmith shop, now closed for the night, he stopped and let his tears and sobs have full sway for a brief space. Then he wiped his face and ran home again.

Freddy now completely relieved his mother of the care of his invalid brother. He carried Henry down the stairs or up on the roof. He took him out for an airing; he dressed and undressed him. Under no circumstances would he let his mother strain herself in the lifting of the invalid who was as immovable as a log. He did his chores as if they were the most natural thing for him to do. Gottfried would often look at his son and ponder. There was a pronounced streak of kindliness in Freddy which he himself had never had. The boy must have got it from his mother.

It was the middle of April. The day had been unusually mild. Freddy felt lighthearted and made the three blocks

from the school to his home at a run. He had an idea. He would take little Henry down for an airing and Mother must come with them. They would go to the East River and thence to the Park. They would take a long, long walk. It would be delightful.

As he was running up the steps to his home he passed a woman in the hall who looked at him queerly. He felt that something had happened, and wondered what. He opened the door of the house in haste, but he shut it very slowly — he had taken in the situation. Little Henry was sick. The doctor was there, standing beside the bed speaking to his mother. Freddy caught these words: "Oh, yes," the doctor was saying, "he must have been sick for some time, but you did not notice it. That is the way it goes with these cases. They go on ailing for a long while, but we become accustomed to their distorted features and so fail to notice any difference. It is an abscess on the liver and it has burst. He may last a few days yet, or he may go sooner."

Freddy sat up a good part of the night with his father, watching little Henry gradually yielding himself up to death. Anna was in bed, pretending that she wanted to rest. In reality she was crying. Freddy and his father spoke little to one another; each was busy with his own thoughts. Freddy was trying hard to recall how his brother looked and acted before that fateful accident. He had heard his mother tell about little Henry, how nice and lively he had been, and from her description of him, he was now constructing pictures that he thought were memories.

And Gottfried looked at the wan face of his invalid son, which was becoming more and more corpselike, and thought of the thirteen years he had been in America. They had been hard years. Of course, there were flashes of happiness. Also they had been years of growth — he had broadened in

these years — had learned much. But he had drunk his gall and wormwood. His family life was beaten and battered. Anna was a sick woman.

Freddy felt his father's gaze upon him and when he looked up, questioning, Gottfried turned his eyes on the invalid once more. He had been looking at Freddy, and thinking of that Sunday when he had so solemnly founded the House of Conrad in the New World. Inwardly he laughed sadly and bitterly at the memory of that day. How deceitful life was! He had pictured to himself his future house, the House of Conrad, as being a milestone in the New World, a landmark! And now a part of that House of Conrad was about to be taken out of his home and to be buried in the ground — his interest in cremation had not waned, but somehow it did not extend to his invalid child -- and Freddy alone, eleven-year-old Freddy, was his only promise for that much-longed-for house.

Conrad quickly bent over his dying son. It seemed to him that little Henry had ceased breathing. But, no, he was mistaken. His overwrought nerves had deceived him. He turned his attention to Freddy once more. It was past eleven o'clock, time for him to go to sleep. Freddy made no remonstrance. He was tired. He crawled under the quilt and was asleep.

He woke with a holiday feeling. He could not explain how or why, but it seemed to him as if it were a Sunday. The sun was streaming into the house and through the raised window came a delightful breeze. His father was home. He was talking with another man, a stranger. His mother stood by, silent.

In an instant the holiday feeling fled. In the parlor on two chairs stood a coffin, and in it lay Henry. He was washed and dressed and his hair was combed. His eyes were

closed and his face now looked more normal and natural than Freddy ever remembered seeing it.

Late in September of the same year, Gottfried and his wife sought Dr. Seelenfreund once more. Their mission was a delicate one. Both Anna and Gottfried were lonesome since Henry died. There was a sense of something missing in the house. Freddy was a big boy — was in fact getting to be a little man. Gottfried and his wife were still young — They wanted a child.

Dr. Seelenfreund pretended not to notice the crimson in Gottfried's face as he stated his wish to the physician. The doctor questioned Anna minutely about the general condition of her health; made her tell circumstantially the story of the miscarriage. Then he ordered her into the examining room, where she remained for twenty minutes while Gottfried, in the next room, shifted uneasily in his chair as he studied the pictures on the wall and the instruments in the glass case.

The verdict of the physician — for such was the spirit in which Gottfried and Anna took his words — was not favorable. Mrs. Conrad would not have a child — not for some time anyway, he said. Such accidents as the one she had gone through, often, and in an unaccountable manner, unfit women for future childbearing. It was even likely that she would never have a child at all.

Gottfried stared stonily from the physician to his wife. As he helped Anna with her coat he felt her trembling. The physician tried to cheer them. They were really not so badly off, he was saying, better off than thousands of others. For they had a son. Many a well-known family had been started by an only son.

They had plenty of time to ponder over the doctor's words, for it was Saturday and Gottfried was home the rest of the

day and all day Sunday. They moved about the house quietly, and whenever Freddy came near one or the other of his parents he felt their eyes rest upon him with a pathetic tenderness he had never observed in them before. He was wondering what the meaning of it could be. He wanted to ask his parents, but he felt awkward.

CHAPTER V

THE RETURN OF CONRAD

"WELL, it has been a pretty long furlough," Conrad murmured to himself as if in response to a question. He was returning from a meeting of the board of managers of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* late on a November evening. He had been a member of the board of managers of the socialist paper ever since it was started nearly two years back, but had rarely attended meetings. What had transpired at the meeting that evening was giving him food for reflection and memories.

He felt as if he had remained behind. The movement had grown apace and the youngbloods he met that evening certainly made him feel strange. He went over in his mind the last few years. He was home night after night, tending to his ailing wife and his invalid son. Only on occasions of unusual character did he deviate from this course and ascend a platform to make an address. And now he was coming back to the movement. The invalid was dead; Anna, while not entirely well, was much stronger. It seemed as if, with the departure of the invalid, a cloud had been raised from before their eyes. Freddy was a big boy already.

Conrad mused. He saw ahead of him a life of activity in the socialist and labor movement. He welcomed activity now. Especially since Dr. Seelenfreund said that they would have no more children. The youngbloods in the movement?

They had made him feel uncomfortable for a while. But now he laughed; his confidence was back. They and he would be speaking in different tongues. They were fresh from the Fatherland; he had gone through much in the New World. His speeches would deal with life as he had known it, with the problems of the poor as he had seen them, suffered them. His thoughts went back to the meeting. For nearly two years now they had had a socialist newspaper in New York, the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. For two years this paper had been thundering daily against oppression and injustice; every issue was a threat of vengeance to the exploiters and oppressors . . . And this from such small beginnings. He looked back fourteen years when they, the handful of Lassalleans, with Heinrich Kolb and himself at the head, laid the foundations of a socialist movement among the German workmen of New York. . . . Not bad, not bad.

His memory, like the lense of a telescope, was now adjusted on that evening when the first number of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* was to appear. In spite of the troubled state of his home, he had slipped out of the house and spent the greater part of the night in the office of the socialist paper that was about to be born. He recalled distinctly the tense, solemn expressions on the faces of the writers, the editors, as they prepared the copy for that first issue. He had gone to see the compositors at work; had read the first editorial in proof which was still wet. . . . And then came the rumbling of the press. . . . His eyes were moist, but he need not be ashamed of that. Editors, writers, compositors, in fact every one who was in the rooms was cutting a sorry figure trying to appear calm. Some one brought up a handful of papers and distributed them; Kolb, the editor, receiving the first copy; he, Conrad, the second. In one corner of the paper he found a list of names of the board of managers, of the men who

for years had worked to make possible the publication of this socialist organ. His name headed the list of these founders. It was inscribed for posterity to look at — to remember.

Conrad's return to active participation in the socialist movement was hailed with joy by Heinrich Kolb. These were stirring times for the socialist organ and its editor. The effects of Bismarck's anti-socialist laws in Germany were beginning to make themselves felt in the New World and especially in New York. Thousands of German socialists had fled to America. While Kolb and his comrades in the socialist movement welcomed these newcomers as additional recruits in the army of the American proletariat, Kolb was just a little apprehensive of the viewpoint of these men. In theory they knew socialism to perfection. But their ignorance of American conditions, American industries, American laws, manifested itself only too often and clumsily. It was for this reason that Kolb welcomed the return of Conrad to the movement. His fourteen years in American shops and factories gave Conrad an experience which was worth while impressing upon the younger men. Conrad knew American life from many angles. He had paid rent in the New World for fourteen years and knew the evils of the tenements. He had led strikes and helped build organizations.

The first speech Conrad made was, upon Kolb's order, given two columns in the paper. Kolb himself wrote an editorial about it which consisted largely of a eulogy of the speaker and of his work as one of the pioneers of the socialist movement in America.

"The *Arbeiter Zeitung*," Kolb wrote, "is happy to see this indefatigable champion of the American proletariat return to his wonted place on the public platform. We have missed his good counsel for some years. We hope henceforward to

see our comrade retain his place in the front ranks uninterruptedly."

Whenever an issue arose dealing with a practical phase of city life, Kolb would warn the writer of the particular article to consult with Conrad and get his views on the question before writing about it. The attitude which Conrad took on the particular question became the policy of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, and Kolb soon found out that this attitude was right, that his readers approved of it. Conrad was close to the hearts and the sentiments of the German workers of New York.

At meetings Conrad's name would invariably be placed at the bottom of the list now. He was a drawing card; the younger and less important speakers came first — for him people would wait. In introducing Conrad the chairman would always preface his remarks with a few words about the length of Conrad's activity in the socialist movement in America for the benefit of those in the audience who were hearing and seeing the man for the first time. And at almost every meeting there were scores of such men, newcomers who had been driven to the New World by the Prussian anti-socialist laws.

At times these newcomers would make Conrad feel old. As he walked through the streets of Little Germany he would often hear himself pointed out as "that Conrad." These younger men were actually drawing barriers between him and themselves — barriers of respect, admiration, reverence. Conrad, Kolb and their pioneer friends were now frequently referred to as the "Frühen," "the early ones," by the younger socialists. The younger men were compelling them to take themselves seriously. They had to have some one to look up to.

The calls upon Conrad were becoming so frequent that he

was hardly ever home evenings. The excitement of this constant coming and going, the applause and approbation that he received nightly from large numbers of people, crowded the memory of the visit to Dr. Seelenfreund and his "verdict" well to the back of his brain. It was comparatively easy now for Gottfried to dismiss the troublesome thought. But it was not so to his wife.

Anna Conrad, spending the long winter evenings and frequently even Sundays alone, was brooding over the fact that never again would she have babies in her house. Other women might wheel baby carriages, but not she. She had often in the first years of her married life wished a rest from the children. She was tired of the work they gave her. She complained then — Well, she would have plenty of rest now, plenty of leisure. God, how much leisure! She shuddered.

She could not free herself from the thought of babies. She could not stifle her desire for them. And then — then one day she found that she could think of babies all she wished to, could get really excited over them. Why, how foolish of her not to have thought of it sooner! Why, Freddy — he would marry, perhaps only in half a dozen years, he would have children and then she would have babies again. There would never be any more lonely Sundays. She would not let Freddy's wife bother about making meals on Sunday. No, she wouldn't. She would have them — her daughter, her son and their little infants, with her Sundays, always. They would all eat at her house. And the babies would be playing right there on the floor in front of her.

From the rocker in which she sat, plunged in visions, she was looking at the floor. She was alone in the house and it was Sunday afternoon. Gottfried was gone, Freddy was gone. It was spring outside. The laughter of children rang

through the open window. And she looked at the floor and saw them there — the babies — her Freddy's children. They were learning to walk, falling, getting up, gurgling sweetly and extending their pudgy little hands. It was so much pleasure, so much pleasure. . . . Gottfried, Gottfried, he must see this. . . .

She woke from her dreams. Freddy had slipped into the house noiselessly. He saw his mother's transported gaze and halted. She now smiled at him through her dim eyes.

"Are you ill, Mother?" he asked.

"I'll be all right in a minute," she said, and she took both his hands in hers and pressed them to her cheek.

Freddy was twelve years old. Outwardly he strongly resembled Gottfried. He had something of the military stateliness of his Prussian parent. Like Gottfried, too, he was quick to grasp a situation, and he was thinking. But he had not his father's fervor. He had plenty of enthusiasm but no abandon. He was calculating, cautious almost beyond his years. Gottfried noted this trait in his son and ascribed it to the child's long association with his invalid brother and with his ailing mother. This he thought might be responsible for Freddy's letting his enthusiasm be guided by reason and calculation first. The sight of suffering makes one thoughtful.

"All the same the boy is no thickhead," Conrad would say to himself whenever he took stock of his son. And he was taking stock frequently. Gottfried Conrad was making a place for himself in the socialist movement of the New World. Would his son follow in his footsteps? Whenever this thought occurred to Conrad he invariably experienced a yearning to get home as quickly as possible. He wanted to be near his boy. A father should be in closer association with

his growing son than he was with his Lassalle, he would chide himself.

In such moments Conrad would recall with a pang his own mother and his conduct toward her. His father had died when he was a year old and his mother remarried soon after. She found a home with her second husband. They had eight children. Gottfried was treated by his mother no differently than the other children. But he somehow never felt much kinship with the rest of the family, especially as he grew older. There was something missing somewhere. He realized it all the more keenly as he was growing up and was earning his own livelihood. And then he left home and never came back. He had never written to his mother, did not know whether she was alive or not. That was a horrible relation between parent and child, he thought. There must never arise such a relation between himself and his Freddy.

He was anxious about his boy's studies. But he would never question Freddy much about his school work. The situation had greatly changed since the days when Freddy first started school. He was now studying history and geography. He was studying American literature. He answered his father's questions about everyday things in German easily enough. But anything concerning his education he would have to answer in English. German had become the language of the kitchen to Fred. It was the back door language to his little world. The front door was English. It was the reverse with Conrad. Only about the simplest things would he speak to his son in English. A real conversation he could only hold in German.

To question his son about his studies with any degree of detail would thus merely serve to emphasize the difference between the German speaking father and the English-speaking son. Conrad was not eager to raise a situation where this

difference between himself and his son would be made to stand out sharply.

Even with the care which Conrad was exercising not to allow the difference in language to creep in between himself and his son nor to permit it to color or in any way affect their relations, such differences were constantly arising.

Thus Freddy once overheard his teachers discuss a graft scandal about which the whole city was talking.

"What can you expect," said one of the teachers, a New England Yankee to whom Freddy always looked up as to a typical American, "what can you expect in a city ruled by foreigners. It is the aliens who debase our government and demoralize our public life. We are ruled directly and indirectly by immigrants or sons of immigrants. They do not speak our language; they are foreign to our ideals; they are strangers to our manners."

In the evening Freddy kept on plying his father with questions about the graft scandal. Conrad had got the facts from the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, which told in a few simple words how public funds had been appropriated by politicians under various guises. He repeated the things he had read in the paper to his son.

"Are the foreigners to blame for it?" Freddy asked.

"Why foreigners? What makes you ask this question?" Gottfried searched his son with a look.

Freddy narrated the conversation between his teachers which laid the graft at the door of the alien population.

Conrad did not answer at once. It was a delicate matter. Freddy had great respect for his teachers, especially the one who had attacked the foreign population. Conrad contented himself therefore with a brief, calm statement.

"Well," he said, "all of the men who are involved in this scandal are speaking English. Most of them, in fact, have

American names. But whether natives or immigrants they could not get their jobs in the City Hall if they did not speak English. They are citizens, Americans."

The logic of it struck the boy. His father was right. Nevertheless he did not feel quite at ease. The words his teacher had spoken rankled within him. On a rainy day soon after Freddy observed a woman teacher eating her lunch in the office. She was eating sandwiches of white bread. The entire sandwich was in every case thinner than a single slice of bread their German neighbors would cut. The sandwiches were wrapped in a napkin. A small glass jar contained jam. Beside it lay a neat little spoon. He detected a pickle near one of the sandwiches — but what a difference in girth between the tiny sweet pickle of the American teacher and the massive dill pickles which came to their own table!

It dawned upon him that that was in part at least what the teacher meant when he said that the foreigners were strangers to American manners. He recalled the last picnic to which he and his parents had gone that summer. It was a terribly noisy affair. People carried lunch baskets on their arms as if they were going for a journey half across the continent. The little park where the picnic was held reeked of beer, of strong smelling cheese and of blood pudding. Noise, noise everywhere. Noise and beer, noise and bologna, that was the atmosphere at their meetings, at every festival.

He once blurted out as much to his father. Gottfried looked at his son long and then answered slowly:

"Yes, I guess we do lack manners." After a while he added, "Will you come to a meeting with me to-night? I am going to speak."

Gottfried thought he would try this method of bringing his son closer to himself.

Freddy went to the meeting with his father and he went

to other meetings after that. Conrad would find a convenient nook for his son on the platform and the boy would sit there hour after hour watching, observing, listening. In the audience he would recognize men and women of their acquaintance. But from the platform they looked so different. His father seemed superior to them all. They listened to him, drank in every word he said, applauded him.

As Conrad stood there before the audience in his Sunday clothes, his hair grown somewhat long, hurling words of defiance, painting injustice, arraigning, pleading, rousing the people in front of him, he was impressive. At such moments Freddy forgot that his father was speaking in German — what did language matter? His father was speaking the truth. Conrad was not mistaken in his experiment of taking Freddy with him to the halls and meeting places on the nights he spoke. He was winning the boy over to his cause, to his ideas. He was happy. He was building great hopes upon his son. A faint glimmer of the splendor of the House of Conrad was beginning to loom on the horizon.

But it did not loom for long. A rift in the relations between father and son occurred within the next few days which neither years nor reason could make whole again.

It was before election and the district teemed with political meetings. A meeting at Cooper Union to which the residents of *Kleindeutschland* were specially invited was to be addressed by a United States senator. Conrad had no intention of going to that meeting of a sworn enemy of the working class, as he called the senator, but Freddy, who had read the posters and had seen the picture of the senator, asked his father to go with him to Cooper Union that evening.

He was impressed from the start. The ushers impressed him and the crowd impressed him. For the ushers at the meeting were Americans and the crowd, in spite of the special

appeal made to the German element, was American. Everybody spoke English. A polite cordiality vibrated through the hall instead of the free and easy camaraderie to which Freddy was accustomed at German meetings. Freddy and his father occupied seats in the second row.

The chairman made a brief speech and then the speaker of the evening came forward. Freddy's eyes were riveted upon the man. The senator — Alden Burr Willett — was a tall man with a closely trimmed, dark grayish beard. His frock coat and creased trousers hung on him with a peculiar grace. But what gave him an air of distinction above all else were his shoes. Soft shoes they were, wide-toed and not too shiny. Freddy had never seen such shoes before. They were as fine as the man; and how they clung to his feet! He had never seen shoes cling that way before. The tops, the soles, the tips, responded like well behaved servants to every motion from the man's foot. The shoes were the man. Freddy was positive they never touched the sidewalk on a rainy day without goloshes. His father had called the senator a tool of the capitalists and a deadly enemy of the plain people. Freddy sought confirmation of his father's words in the man's voice. His appearance thus far had been all gentleness.

The senator's voice harmonized with his appearance. It was soft. He was not shouting. He was not trying to cram anything down the throats of his hearers. God forbid! He was talking to the audience gently, as one talks to one's neighbors on the veranda of one's spacious and comfortable home. He jested, told stories about the farmer and the cow and about Pat the Irishman. The audience laughed; they enjoyed themselves hugely. Everybody was at ease.

And then the senator's voice grew a trifle somber. He was serious now. But still his voice was not harsh. He spoke

like a father giving friendly though earnest counsel to his children who are about to leave him. He was enumerating the blessings which the country was enjoying, the prosperity which was shared by the whole American people, and especially by the workingmen — this was supposed to be a meeting for workingmen. To insure this prosperity it was paramount to elect the candidates of his party. It was especially the duty of the working people to vote for his party. It was to their interest, to the interest of their wives and children.

The senator's voice rose higher and higher and its echo came back from every part of the hall. He was a master speaker; the senate knew him as such. He was holding the people in the hall spellbound. Freddy watched him breathlessly. And now came the climax. The senator thrust his chest forward, stood on the tips of his toes — his shoes bent with wonderful grace — and challenged the other party, the other candidates, the whole world, any one in the audience, to show him a place where the workingman was living in so much happiness and prosperity, under such ideal and idyllic conditions of industry — where, where outside this land of the free? He sank into his chair to a storm of applause.

Freddy looked up at his father for the first time in half an hour, and was taken aback by the enraged look in his parent's eyes. Had the senator been standing face to face with Conrad, Freddy had no doubt but that his father would have sprung at the man with his fists. As it was, Gottfried sat erect, every nerve in his body tense with expectation. Conrad was apparently waiting for something. Now it came.

The chairman of the evening, who had been waiting for the applause to subside, was now calling upon the audience to ask questions. The senator would gladly answer questions. Conrad was on his feet in a flash, waving his hand

wildly. He was given the floor. It all happened in a moment, and before Freddy realized what was taking place, he heard his father's voice with his strong German accent resound through the hall. His father was speaking.

What about the tenements, Gottfried was asking, where men and women worked from six o'clock in the morning until nine and ten o'clock at night for a meager subsistence? Was the senator aware of these? He could point out to the senator thousands of such tenements, tens of thousands of people struggling, slaving, dying in them. And about the shirtwaist strikers — was the senator aware of them? Ten thousand women and girls had been on strike for five weeks now against a system of inhuman sweating and exploitation. Why did not the senator speak of that? That too was taking place under the Stars and Stripes. Thus far Conrad's words were intelligible in spite of the accent with which they were spoken. But here excitement got the best of him. He began to pour out a flood of words, facts, statistics about sweatshops and poverty in New York, facts and statistics which he had at his fingers' ends, which none of them could dispute. And no one did dispute them. For only a few men in the audience now understood him. The rest could not make out a word he was saying. Freddy noticed the smiles appearing on the faces of men all about them. His face burned with shame. If they were only outside — if he could only run away. In the meantime, a murmur was arising, a murmur of anger.

"Aw, sit down!" some one shouted. "Nobody understands a word you are saying."

"Sit down, sit down!" came from every part of the hall.

"Throw him out, that Dutchman!"

"We don't speak that language here — this is the United States!"

"Sit down; you are creating a disturbance." An usher was at his side.

Conrad, his face red and bewildered, was trying to explain, but no one would listen to him.

"Sit down," the usher was saying: "sit down or I will throw you out."

The senator meantime rose, apparently to restore order. But he was not exerting himself too much. He would not deprive the audience of a chance to have its fun. Besides, these socialists were getting troublesome. He saw at once that the man before him was a socialist. It wouldn't do any harm to give that fellow there a lesson. It was some time before the senator spoke up.

"Gentlemen," Senator Willett was saying, his soft shoes beating tune to the velvet of his voice, "gentlemen, this man has a perfect right to ask questions." And he proceeded to "answer" Conrad. In spite of the accent with which Gottfried spoke, the senator readily caught the drift of his questions.

"This gentleman," he said suavely, as he swept his eyes over the place where Conrad was supposed to be sitting, "this gentleman is a socialist. Any one can see that." There was a wink in the speaker's eyes as he said this. The audience caught it and a ripple of laughter ran through the hall. The senator went on with apparent seriousness, but behind this seriousness there lurked a bantering tone that no one could mistake. Senator Willett was now demolishing the socialist theory with great ease. He knew all about these visionaries. Men will run off sometimes; it takes all sorts of people to make a world. Too bad, however, that this should happen in a country whose opportunities are unlimited, whose very name spells hope and freedom. Has he answered the speaker's questions?

Senator Willett looked in the direction of Conrad. Of course he had not even come anywhere near the questions about the tenements and sweating that Conrad had raised. His seeming earnestness was the acme of sarcasm. Gottfried was too sick of the whole thing to reply. He detested the man and his cleverness.

"I assume," said the speaker, "that the gentleman's questions have been answered satisfactorily." The meeting was closed.

Conrad's neighbors poured out their contempt for him in their looks. He edged his way through the crowd. Freddy, who followed his father without looking at any one, heard some one remark: "There is that Dutchman!" The rest was drowned in a guffaw of laughter.

They walked in silence. Neither of them could bring himself to speak. To Freddy only one thing stood out clear. His father was right, but he was made the laughing-stock of the audience because he could not speak English, because he was a foreigner. Another man in his place, he reasoned feverishly, a man speaking English, a man who was not a foreigner, could have made his argument stand out formidably. The senator would have had difficulty in answering it. Yes, he would. The more Freddy recalled the senator with his soft, yielding shoes, the more convinced he was that the senator knew nothing about the problems of the men and women who worked for a dollar and a quarter a day, problems with which he, Freddy, was already familiar. Yes, the whole thing resolved itself to the matter of not being a foreigner, of speaking like an American.

While Freddy was revolving these thoughts in his mind, Conrad's heated feelings were giving way to thoughtfulness. He was no longer angry with the senator and with the American audience which refused to listen to the truth. The insult

meant nothing to him now. It was war on capitalism they, the socialists, would make. The senator was one of the pillars of the capitalist system. What else but insult could a socialist expect from a capitalist senator and a capitalist-minded audience? But he was worried about his son.

The events of the evening had become but a symbol of a greater struggle to come. Senator Willett, glib-tongued, slick-mannered, speaking artfully but without the least sincerity, was the type of the great run of American politicians. The audience of the evening, too indolent for earnest thought, feeding on flattery, was the type of the great run of Americans. They were America. And this America was seeking his son's soul. There was danger ahead — danger for the House of Conrad.

"Hypocrites," Conrad spat to one side, "hypocrites, that is what they are. They make a pious face about liberty and equality while they are forging an iron ring of capitalism about the public. They prate about the welfare of the masses — where is this welfare? Ten thousand girls who have been getting starvation wages for years are on strike for an increase in wages of twenty-five cents a day, an increase of about a quarter of a cent or less on a shirt. They need this extra quarter a day for bread, for clothes, for a little more light in their homes. Are these benevolent Americans giving the girls the increase? No. 'Take it or go,' that is their attitude. 'We can get plenty of slaves to fill your places.'

"Hypocrites," Conrad lowered his voice as if he were speaking to himself, but Freddy caught his father's every word. "They tell you it is 'Ladies first' in this country. They speak of the chivalry of American men. Nice chivalry this is. 'Ladies first,' yes, to the river — or the brothel."

They reached the house. Conrad paused a moment.

Then, as if in response to a remark which his son once made, and which he never quite forgot, he said:

"Yes, they have nice manners, but where is the heart?"

It was late and Anna was sleeping. They were glad, for it was an excuse for silence. Freddy went to bed and was soon asleep; the excitement of the evening had wearied him. But Conrad tossed, wakeful, for a long time.

When Freddy opened his eyes the following morning, he was surprised to see his mother go about in the kitchen in her wonted manner. He had been dreaming that he was a man and was working. His disappointment at waking up to be a boy again, a boy not yet thirteen, was keen. In school that day he could not fix his mind upon his work. At first he seemed to be listening to a speech, in English, which kept resounding through his ears. When the teacher woke him out of his dreams, he realized that it was he himself that was making the speech, and abruptly the smoothly flowing English sentences were cut off.

Then he looked about the room, and although school had been on for nearly six weeks, he realized for the first time that he missed two of his friends, boys of his own age. They had gone to work. He was eager to get home to speak to his mother about going to work too. And when he did so Anna looked at him speechlessly. She was utterly unable to respond to his questions. When she was alone she cried. After supper when the boy went downstairs she told her husband about it and Conrad, too, felt shaken up by the thought. He had intended to go over to the hall that evening, but changed his mind and stayed home. He was waiting for Freddy to come back, not to talk to him, but just to see him. He would take a good look at his son who was thinking of going to work.

CHAPTER VI

DESIRES

IN the bakeshop of Hermann Keller the employees seldom reckoned time by the clock. When the last of three hundred loaves of rye bread had been despatched into the oven they knew it was midnight and therefore mealtime. Each rushed to the rear of the shop to grab his lunch which lay next to his street clothes. Each man, too, would rinse his tin pail and hand it to the "helper" without a word. The "helper" knew the rest.

On this particular May night the helper was not there to take the pails from the workmen. The helper was a new boy. He had come to work that evening and was not yet familiar with the routine of his job. He had washed and scrubbed the pans as he was told. He had watched one of the men cook the yeast so as to be able to do it himself the next day. But he was not yet aware of the midnight meal and of the beer.

"Hier, Junge!" the shop foreman, or "first hand," called, and a blond lad of thirteen, who had been leaning against a large sack of flour, came up.

"Hier," said the foreman, "take these pails and run across the street to Schultz's — the saloon — and have them filled. It is all right about paying. Just tell him you are from Keller's and that you are the new boy."

While waiting for the beer they unwrapped their lunch and laid it on the benches. One or two nibbled at the bulky sandwiches; the rest sat waiting for the boy. When the

helper had returned each grabbed his pail from him and began to drink the cold beverage avidly. Working in front of a hot oven half the night makes for thirst.

For a few minutes there was complete silence in the room; the men were munching their sandwiches without a word. When the first strong craving for food had been allayed, conversation was in order. It began with the helper. The lad was sitting on one of the tubs, eating a cold beef sandwich and shyly looking away from the rest of the workmen, when the foreman called him.

"There is a glass," the foreman pointed to the sink and the lad brought it on the jump. The foreman poured a glassful of beer from his own pail and gave it to the boy.

"There, drink it," he said. "If you want to be a good baker you got to drink. You'll sweat it out soon enough by the fire."

The foreman then turned to one of the younger men, the words rolling from under his long mustache jovially: "You are hardly eating to-night, Freddy," he said. "What's the matter? Thinking of your girl, eh?"

"Freddy is lovesick," another of the workmen bantered. A third added with a sly wink, "Yes, he's been chasing around with the girls something fierce lately."

"Anybody else got anything to say?" the youth who was thus made game of responded calmly and in clear, sharp English, in contradistinction to the German in which the others had dressed their remarks. He was looking with an air of expectancy at two workmen, likewise older than himself, who had laughed at the jests of the others, but had not themselves spoken. Did they too have any jests at his expense? He was waiting.

But they had none. The clear, incisive English in which he had spoken had the effect of dampening the mirth of the

men. The English language carried with it a weight and authority in the cellar bakeshop to which even the "first hand" yielded. In spite of his bantering the foreman at all times felt a certain respect for the youth who was the only American in the shop; who was the only baker in Kleindeutschland to whom English was the mother tongue. The bantering ceased; the bakers bit into their sandwiches more vigorously. Left alone, Fred returned to the reminiscences which the sight of the new helper, standing in one corner of the bakeshop with a lone, forlorn look, had stirred within him.

Five years had passed since that morning when the not yet thirteen-year-old Freddy woke with the definite desire to go to work. His parents insisted that he give up all thought of work until he had graduated from the public school. This he did, and then he loafed the whole summer, loafed trying to think what he would like to do, what occupation he would rather choose. His father did not give him much help in the matter. Conrad wanted his son to follow his own inclinations. And Fred followed not so much his inclination as a certain vision which had taken hold of his boyish brain, an illusion, as he now knew it to be, and hired out as a baker's apprentice.

That his son's inclinations were in the direction of being a workingman pleased Conrad. It was in accord with his plans for his boy, for his Lassalle. Not that he did not wish his son to be an educated man! On the contrary. They, the socialists, were for an education first to last, but for an education differently obtained and used differently. At present, Conrad observed, education was most often used by the children of the poor, not for the benefit of their oppressed and exploited brethren, not as a lever with which to lift up their kind to a higher level of prosperity and happiness, but as

a stepladder for their own entry into the "parasitic class." That was the philosophy of the schools, that was the spirit which the child imbibed there — to improve his own condition and forget the rest, forget or even wink his eye at the existence of wrong and injustice, so long as he managed to escape them.

Under other circumstances, Conrad often thought to himself, under another régime, he would have sent his boy to high school and to college. But not now, not under the capitalist system under which they lived. To send the boy to high school and to college now could have but one result! He would be lost to the working class. No, Fred must seek to complete his education outside the school buildings and influences. His son should stand with the proletariat!

The circle from which Fred might choose an occupation was a narrow one. The Germans in New York followed four principal trades at the time. They were cigarmakers, brewery workers, carpenters and bakers. In these trades the workers were strongly organized; in others they were not. Fred no more than his father would consider entering a trade where the men were unorganized. It was about these four trades therefore that his thoughts were revolving during the summer months when he was taking what was to prove his last long vacation.

As these last free days of childhood were drawing to a close and the first breath of autumn had swept over the tenements, Fred was seized with a sudden and pathetic longing for the free days and especially the free afternoons which were about to come to an end — forever. Along with his craving to be a workman, to be independent, to be considered a man, there went the thought that this meant renouncing forever his days, his afternoons, sacrificing one half of his life, the best half. He would now watch the men and boys in the

district as they returned from work at seven o'clock every evening. He knew that they had been away from home since six in the morning and his heart sank within him. To go to work meant to say good-by to daylight in the open forever. He would not even have the three hours in the afternoon which he had while he went to school. The shop employment, which he had looked up to as a source of independence, exacted a severe toll for this independence. It took one's days from one.

As he was brooding over these things gloomily one day, he observed Anton Schwabiger, a neighbor of theirs, going over to the saloon with a pitcher. In a few minutes the neighbor was returning, his pitcher filled. And then for the next quarter of an hour Freddy saw Schwabiger sitting at the table near the window, drinking down glass after glass of the beer with evident relish.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon — what was Schwabiger doing home at this time? Schwabiger's son had been his playmate for some time. The bits of information on his domestic affairs which the boy occasionally volunteered now pieced themselves together with clearness and coherence. Everything was explained; the conclusions were drawn; his own decision made.

Schwabiger was a baker; he worked nights. Freddy saw him leave his house about six o'clock every evening. He had often seen Schwabiger's boy enter the house on tiptoe in the daytime because his father was sleeping. Schwabiger slept until about half-past two in the afternoon and then he sat around the rest of the day.

Freddy's imagination fevered at the discovery. That solved his problem for him. He would be a baker and would steal a march on Father Time. He would have the whole afternoon to himself. He could do with six hours' sleep

easily. He would come home at six in the morning, eat his breakfast and go to sleep. He would rise at one or half-past and then would have until six o'clock to himself.

When Freddy told his father that he wanted to be a baker, he hid from him the reason for choosing this trade. He did not know exactly why, but he had a vague fear that his parent might somehow frustrate his plans. His father was penetrating.

Gottfried was caught off guard. The bakers had been much in the limelight then. They had just won a prolonged strike. As was natural, the strike was led by the *Arbeiter Zeitung,* and the victory for the men was a triumph for the paper and for the socialist cause it championed. Besides, the bakers had won real concessions. Their hours were shortened; new sanitary regulations were adopted. One of these was the abolition of the boarding system. The bakery workers were no longer to be compelled to board with the boss and sleep in the rear of the moist, unsanitary cellar bakeshops The union of the men had emerged from the strike stronger than ever.

It was of these things Conrad was thinking when his boy told him that he wanted to be a baker. His son, he thought, was inspired by the victory of the bakers, by their strong union, and that was the reason he wanted to enter the bakers' trade. From the standpoint of his, Conrad's, plans for his son, the bakery trade would not be a bad one for his boy to enter. The baker's organization was made up largely of socialists. The boy would drink in the spirit of revolt with his milk, so to speak. What worried Gottfried was the fact that his son would be away from home evenings. He would see him so seldom, only a few minutes in the morning before he left for work. Anna too was worried over it. But she was now learning to submit to the will of her son, as she had

once learned to submit to the will of her husband. And Freddy was determined to be a baker. His mind was set on it. They came to wonder a little why he was so enthusiastic over the prospect of being a baker. But Fred kept his dream of saving his afternoons secret. And one day soon afterward his fate was sealed with his entry as a helper in the bakeshop of Hermann Keller.

The murky light of the cellar deepened the shadows in Freddy's face as he recalled the events of the past three and a half years. He had long ago become accustomed to the odor of the place — had become hardened against it. But as he watched the nostrils of the thirteen-year-old boy, who was now being broken in as a helper, quiver and tug and struggle as if revolting against the steady quaffing in of the sour fumes of the bakeshop, the nauseating smell of the place revolted him too as on the night he entered the cellar for the first time.

The appearance of the shop had not changed in the three and a half years. Two big ovens, built into the wall, faced each other. Between these were the benches, boxes, pans and dough receptacles of all sorts, which contained, in various stages, the bread, rolls and cakes that were fed nightly to these ever hungry ovens. Along one of the walls, piled to the ceiling, were sacks of flour. The other wall was lined with barrels and kegs of various sizes. To one side stood jars of syrups and jellies which went into the making of various rolls and other dainties — food and colic for the children of the district. Paper bags of sugar, raisins, cinnamon, lay scattered on all sides. A big bowl of cheese mixed with eggs that was to go into the making of cheese cake stood fermenting on a shelf. A stale, rat-like smell and the sweat from the half-naked men cemented all of these odors together.

Fred forgot the odors and was harking back in his memory to the days when he saw the life of a baker tinted with a

glow of romance because, as he thought, it offered a chance to save the afternoons. Foolish child that he was! He thought of the afternoons and forgot the evenings. He would have given much now to have entered three and a half years back an occupation which would have left his evenings free. Evenings! Evenings! Evenings were life. Evenings were soft whispers. Evenings were tender looks. Evenings were girls in fresh linen dresses. Evenings were trim waists. Evenings were hands that caressed, eyes that languished. Evenings were the wine of life — the wine he had never tasted. His life had been dry and barren.

He had finished eating. Throwing a coat over his bared shoulders he walked up eight stairs to the sidewalk.

It was a beautiful night. The air was clear and balmy. The blue, starry sky for a moment caused Fred to forget the big tenements and the narrow street, and to think of green fields and trees and fresh water running, rushing over shiny pebbles. He had read of such a scene in a book once.

He was aroused by the sight of a couple coming. He looked at them intently. The woman was dressed in white. Her laughter suddenly rang out in the night like a silver bell. It was a boy and girl — coming home so late. They must have been out to a park, been together all evening. The couple passed on into the next block. Freddy was peering wistfully after them.

Another couple came. They were drunk and were holding each other, clinging to one another as they wabbled along. There was a saloon around the corner and they had evidently just emerged from it. Freddy knew of the saloon. Several of his boy acquaintances frequently went there. The man and woman were now directly across the street from the bake-shop. They stood still and were caressing each other. The woman's hair was falling over her flushed face. She held

her hat in her hand. She was young, under thirty, and buxom. Her companion clung to her plump body.

The drunken pair started off. Fred turned sharply to go down into the basement and bumped into one of his shopmates who, like himself, had been watching the drunken couple speechlessly. Fred had not heard the man come up.

The midnight lunch hour was over and Fred Conrad was standing near his bench rolling the pieces of dough mechanically. Before his eyes still lingered the picture of the first couple, the boy and girl who were coming home one o'clock at night, who had been by themselves all evening. Again and again he heard the girl's laughter. It was an innocent laughter, a laughter that told of love and dreams and joy. These things had not yet come into his life. And the other, the drunken couple — He turned his thoughts from them with a feeling of revulsion.

Fred Conrad was a full-fledged baker by this time. He was "second hand" now and was earning ten and twelve dollars a week. But while he was earning a man's wages, he was a curious mixture of man and child in his relations to his parents and to the world. He knew many things — heard them from the men in the shop. But he shrank from them with an unaccountable loathing. His boy friends had often when he had a night off, asked him to go out with them. They knew certain saloons, certain Weinstubes. And they kept running from one to another of these. They were spending their evenings there. Often they would point out girls to him on the street, girls they knew and who, they said, were of "that kind." They would offer to introduce him. But he would decline with a shrug of alarm. His friends at first teased him about his shyness, and made jokes about it. Later they left him alone. They ceased calling him. He was seldom seen in company. His aloofness, especially from girls

and women, made Fred the object of an occasional pun even among his shopmates. During the lunch hour they frequently bantered him about his puritanic tendencies until rudely silenced by him.

Fred, on the other hand, was puzzled by the attitude of these boys and of his shopmates toward women. He could not reconcile himself to it. Nearly all of them thought of women in only one sense. They spoke of them disrespectfully; often appraised women as one does animals, and used vile epithets apparently for the mere pleasure of speaking these words.

He thought of his mother. He hoped she would never suspect that he had to listen to such talk. He could not look her in the face if she were suspecting it.

At the thought of his mother an atmosphere of grayness would settle over him. Mrs. Conrad was never violently ill these days, but she was never well. Her haggard features occasionally inspired both Conrad and Freddy with uneasiness. When he left for the bakeshop at six o'clock in the evening he would often cast back at his mother a tender, misty gaze. He would hope fervently that he would find her well when he came home from work in the morning. His mother's health was the pivot about which his thoughts, his existence revolved.

It was Fred's turn to go to the oven. This job always required attention. A moment's neglect and a pan of rolls was burned. He worked away briskly with the peel, shoving pans into the oven, changing their position there, bringing them nearer the fire or moving them farther away. There was no time to think when one was at the oven. Time went fast, too. Before one realized, it was four o'clock. At that hour the boss came down into the shop. Hermann Keller always attended in person to the delivery end of the business.

With the entry of the boss there came an hour of intense vigorous work for everybody, including the new helper. The wagons were loaded in haste with the heaping baskets of fresh rolls and bread, and while these were cleared away, the men were rounding out their night's work with the completion of the day's order of cakes and pies. It was half-past five o'clock when the last delivery wagon rolled away and all the bakers but one were now free to take a deep breath, to wash up and go home.

Fred Conrad traversed the length of the basement and through the rear door emerged into the yard. There was grass in the yard and it was bathed in morning dew. The air was cool now and tingled the blood. The helper brought him his pail of beer out there. Fred drained nearly half the can before his thirst, which had been accumulating in front of the oven, was slaked. Then, placing the can on a barrel, he leaned against the wall to rest himself.

The neighborhood was up. Men, women and children were getting ready for the day's call. Beds were being folded, tables set, water splashed. Here a man was clamoring for soap. There a girl and a boy, evidently sister and brother, were quarreling over a towel. The aroma of coffee was rising on all sides.

Fred was listening lazily to these morning noises, he was accustomed to them. They were an everyday occurrence. He stretched out his hand for the pail with the cooling drink. His outstretched hand, however, came back empty and fell limp by his side.

His eyes were riveted on the figure of a girl who was washing on the rear porch of the opposite tenement. He had never seen the girl there before. He recalled now that people had moved from the flat a few days previous. The girl must have just moved in. She was there for the first time. He

had not yet seen her face. She was standing sideways, washing in a bowl of water. Every time her face and neck came in contact with the cold water her entire body responded with a joyous quiver, which the frail, tightly wrapped kimono would outline distinctly. Now the water trickled down the girl's bosom. She cried out gleefully and looked up as if searching for some one to share the joy of the prank with her. Her eyes met those of Fred.

She was his own age, not over seventeen and a half or eighteen. Her face was pretty and mischievous. He stood gazing at her. The girl gave him a prolonged look as if trying to make out just what he was like. In his overalls, his hands and face covered with flour, he was not easy to make out. Then she drew the kimono tighter about her and continued her cleansing operations. The lines of her body stood out even more sharply. Fred had seen a picture of a mermaid in one of his school books. The girl reminded him of that picture — and of the sea, the cold sea.

He was chilled and tired; he had gone out without throwing anything over his shoulders. He picked up the pail, but the beer made no appeal to him now.

In the three and a half years which he had been working as a baker his father never left the house in the morning before Fred came home. Gottfried had on several occasions been late to his work, but he would not miss seeing his son before the latter went off to sleep after his night's work in the bakeshop.

The weary look in Fred's eyes did not escape his father that morning. Anna, too, was at his side with anxious questions. Was he ill? What had happened to him? Was there anything he wanted — anything in particular? Fred made light of his indisposition. He was just a trifle tired, he said. Conrad, eased by his son's words, went to work.

Anna watched over him, however. She saw him linger over his food and her mind was filling with apprehensive thoughts. But Freddy made no complaints whatever.

In spite of the long night's toil and the weariness of his body, he did not fall asleep at once. A sad, painful, yearning came over him. He was thinking of the evenings he was sacrificing to his trade, of the joys that could never be his, he was thinking of the girl he had just seen, the outlines of her body, her neck, her arms as they shivered when they came in contact with the cold water. An intense loneliness seized him. It seemed to him that he was at sea, drifting helplessly, and would never reach land, but would always be drifting, drifting in semi-twilight, benumbed — tired —

In the weeks and months that followed, the thought of marriage often recurred to Fred. More than ever the escapades of which his friends boasted seemed hideous, offensive to him. In a corner of his brain hung as if in a frame a portrait of a little home. It was a three-room flat in one of the newer tenements. There was a sink and water in the kitchen — such an improvement over the home he had spent his life in thus far, where the water had to be pumped in the yard. The sink was of white enamel and the gas was burning bright. Yes, there was even a mantle over the gas jet, as he had seen it in some of the homes of the more up-to-date, richer people in the neighborhood. The mantle made the room so light and cheery.

The picture of the little flat always came to him strongest at dawn when the night's work was drawing to a close and the morning air was chilly. With the thought of the little flat, of home, was associated the thought of warmth, comfort, rest. He was eager then to have the work over with, to get to the house quickly, have done with breakfast and crawl into bed.

For sleep was kind to him. Dreams lent such reality to his yearnings. They clothed them with substance. In his dreams he was the possessor of that light, cozy little flat with the white enameled sink, and he yielded himself up to the softness and the warmth of the home — and of her.

CHAPTER VII

A COUNTRY GIRL

ANNA CONRAD could not always translate her feelings into proper words or even clear thoughts. She realized, however, clearly and painfully the sadness and tragedy of her son's life. It was not normal for the boy to work nights. She recalled her own evenings at home on the Rhine. They held some of the pleasantest moments of her life. To a boy of eighteen what treasures of thrills did not a summer night offer!

But to her son these thrills never came. His youth was frigid, barren. Yet try as she might she could not deceive herself into the belief that her son's plight and sadness was something the New World was to blame for. Evening was evening here too. By day the boys and girls toiled in the shops and factories. At night, however, the children of the tenements drank from the fountain of youth and happiness. In the New World, too, evening was the hour of the gods, the hour of dreams, a time of bliss and forgetfulness. Tired as a girl might be when she was dragging herself home from work, after supper she was dressed neatly, attractively, and was out with her sweetheart or a friend for a ride to the park, or for a walk along the river, or to an amusement place. There were amusement places galore in New York.

The more Mrs. Conrad brooded over these things, the more convinced she was that it was not America that was to blame for her son's loneliness — it was herself. Freddy had been devoting himself too much to her. He had tended to

her ever since he was a child. The sight of his ailing mother, the ever-present dread that she might die at any time and he be left alone, had subdued all exuberance in the boy. His soberer feelings had taught him to stem his emotions, to stifle his longings. No, it was not America, but her own dim strength that was lending such a somber background to Fred's life.

When she sat on the sidewalk near the house on a hot summer's evening her thoughts went out to her son, who was now standing in front of a blazing oven. She would sigh and moan to herself, lamenting over the joy of life her son was missing. Once or twice she asked her husband, through tears, if it were not possible to get Freddy into some other occupation where they did not work nights. But Conrad, with his more analytical mind, dashed her hopes. Fred was by this time master of his trade, earning a man's wages. He was already a member of the union and ready to lead a man's life. The baking occupation was a bad choice to begin with. But now, he feared, the boy would do best to stick to it.

Conrad had long been waiting for the day when his son would be eligible to the union. The day came. As soon as Fred passed his eighteenth year his auxiliary standing in the bakers' organization automatically changed to full membership. Fred was now a full-fledged union man. Conrad followed his son eagerly. He was convinced that he had sown the seeds of working-class thought in the boy's mind and was awaiting the first fruits. He refrained from advising Fred too much with regard to his union affairs. He was determined to let his son stand on his own feet. Nothing would please him more than to see the boy strike out by himself on the road to leadership in the proletarian army.

Fred's increasing wages brought about improvements in

the home life of the Conrads. For some time now the family had lived outside the more congested blocks. Their flat was lighter, larger. The neighborhood was a trifle more American. Mrs. Conrad, especially, liked it here. As for Fred, his new surroundings were soon to exercise a far-reaching control over his destinies.

A few doors away from the new Conrad home there was a painters' and decorators' shop. It was housed in an old two-story frame building, of the type which was then rapidly disappearing in the neighborhood and making room for three- and four-story tenement houses. The man who kept the shop, Warren G. Gardner, was an old New Englander and walked with a decided limp. The place was not a busy one. Mr. Gardner, who was doing contracting in the painting and decorating lines, was not working himself. He was supervising the work of the three men he employed and that took only a few hours a day. The rest of the time he sat in front of his shop deriving a great deal of pleasure from the study of and association with his neighbors.

Mr. Gardner had come to New York from a small town in Massachusetts nearly a generation back. But he never lost the atmosphere of the small town merchant. He soon got to know his neighbors, and knowing them would never fail to greet them with a "good morning" or a "good afternoon." This persistent attempt on his part at being neighborly now and then resulted in ridiculous situations. More than once such a foreign neighbor would look puzzled when greeted by the old Yankee. Here and there a man would hasten on suspiciously, as if fearing that he was either being made fun of or that the old man was trying to ensnare him or trap him into something, else why should he try to speak to him? Mr. Gardner was amused by the suspicion of his neighbors, but he did not swerve from his custom. And in the end he would

win out. People would get to see his bonhomie and not only would they answer his greeting, but he soon taught them to respond to his remarks about the weather and such-like. Every time Mr. Gardner had thus "tamed" one of his neighbors he felt a little better for it, felt as if he had contributed his mite toward presenting the New World in a friendly, pleasant light to the newcomer.

Mr. Gardner was extremely fond of children. He and his wife had no children of their own and it was the one great disappointment of their lives. As the years went on Mrs. Gardner had grown hard. Her features were strong; her manners almost masculine. She wasted no words on any one. A smile on her lips was a rarity. While her husband sat in his chair in front of the shop, or limped about on the sidewalk, smiling, nodding, speaking to every one, she stayed in their living-rooms above the shop and embroidered or knitted.

Fred liked his Yankee neighbor from the first. In spite of the iron gray of his hair, there was something youthful about Mr. Gardner. He took care of his appearance like a young man. Fred never saw him in the street without a collar, a laid down collar with a black cravat. He wore a white shirt with starched cuffs every day, and his vest and trousers looked Sunday-like, though they showed considerable wear. He never rolled up his sleeves, but held them up with arm bands.

But it was the democracy of the man that drew Fred toward him, though Fred did not come to realize this until later in life. There was a world-wise look in Mr. Gardner's eyes, but not a trace of cynicism despite that. To him living seemed to be a serious business, and a nice business. Life was nice, and it was up to the people to keep it nice and help make it nicer wherever possible. Years after they first met, he explained these things to Fred Conrad, these and many more

things. In the meantime, Mr. Gardner enjoyed talking to the boy merely because he was level-headed and rather earnest for his age and refined for his surroundings.

Mr. Gardner knew Fred's father. He had known Gottfried even before the Conrads moved next to his store, for he followed the life of the German Colony and studied its leaders and spokesmen. Indeed, the study of these things had been a kind of religion with Mr. Gardner all through his life. After a fashion he considered himself a steward for the newcomers with whom he was thrown in contact. He was here ahead of them, had come of Revolutionary stock. It was up to him, he felt, to help elucidate America to his immigrant neighbors. His native Anglo-Saxon reserve was always there to hold his activities within proper bounds, so that he never became a pest or bore to his alien friends.

Mr. Gardner had thus known Gottfried Conrad for many years and he now studied his son curiously. They would talk together in the few free hours Fred had in the afternoon about a great many things, and the boy never failed to get a new idea, a new viewpoint from his Yankee neighbor.

It was at this time that the entire country was following the Haymarket case in Chicago with turbulent excitement. In the German Colony of New York interest and partizanship over the case were at white heat. The men condemned to death were labor men and most of them German. Protest meetings, denouncing the verdict, were held nightly. Gottfried Conrad's fiery oratory resounded at every mass meeting, at every gathering.

Fred was familiar with the details of the case from printed reports and from his father's discussions with him. He listened to his father's denunciations of the verdict as legal murder and shared his father's conviction. But he somehow could not work up enthusiasm about the matter. He felt that

despite the fact that he was convinced that the Haymarket prisoners were innocent of the crime charged to them and for which they were facing death, he yet could not be moved to that depth of passion in their behalf to which his father was stirred. Occasionally his own passivity in the matter irritated him. Chicago was a neighboring city and yet he felt about the case as if it were a far-off affair taking place in the depth of India or in the African Jungle.

He was talking over the anarchist case with Mr. Gardner one afternoon. The old shopkeeper listened to the boy earnestly for some time. Then a gleam of satisfaction came into his eyes. His chance had come to say to the youth that which he had for some time wished to say to him, but which his native caution and respect for the principle of minding one's own business had kept him from saying. This time, however, his chance was there and he would take advantage of it.

Gardner had himself followed the anarchist case closely. He had decided opinions about it, though he never confided them to any one.

"The clamor for the blood of these men," Fred had been saying, "comes largely because people don't understand them, don't understand their aims, their temper. What people don't understand, they are hostile to."

At these words of the boy, Gardner's face lit up. "You have said something there, young man," the old Yankee — Gardner was nearly sixty — cried enthusiastically. "You have said something which you will do well to remember. You might write it down; it is worth writing down: 'What people don't understand they are hostile to.'

"My boy," Gardner warmed up, "I have lived in this part of town for thirty years, barring the four years I was in the War. I have seen the first German refugees come here after the revolution of 1848. I have seen the labor movement

rise up. I have seen the Germans, your father among them, come here and sow the seeds of working-class socialism, and I have seen the seeds sprout. I have seen the bread riots of 1873. I have seen scores of meetings of workingmen, and especially of German workingmen, broken up by the police, and the speakers dragged from the platform. I have seen all that, and I have sympathized with the men — I always sympathize with the under dog. I have often tried to account for these clashes and differences. It took me years and years before I realized that which you have just put in one sentence: 'What the people don't understand they are hostile to.'

"Have you ever seen," the old man continued, "any one crucified to-day because he professes to be a Christian? No. Yet the Romans crucified men and women who professed to be Christians. They threw them into the arena as food for ravenous beasts. They soaked their garments in oil and burned them alive. And yet the Romans were not barbarians. They had a most wonderful civilization. They had philosophers and sages. They had lawgivers. They had poets and artists. Many of their institutions are still at the bottom of our institutions. Roman law is at the foundation of our law. Why, then, were they so intolerant toward the early Christians? The answer is: Because they did not understand them, and 'What people don't understand they are hostile to.'"

There was a pause, and as Fred said nothing the old Yankee resumed:

"The ills of our country, the ills of our age and of every age, in the final analysis, resolve themselves to this one thing: the lack of understanding on the part of the various classes of society. The policeman clubs the alien strikers with zest, with gusto, not solely on account of the command he has to

preserve order — his clubbing them does not make for the preservation of order — but because he does not understand them, and what one doesn't understand one is hostile to. The foreigner does not speak the language of the country. His conduct is odd at times, it is ridiculous at other times; and sometimes it is annoying. A thoughtful man knows that a stranger in a new country is like a child in a new world and much must be overlooked and forgiven until the child grows up. But most people are not thoughtful, and our policemen, and the city officials who give them orders, are perhaps the least thoughtful of all. The oddity of the foreigner in them provokes only resentment. That is the situation in Chicago and that is the situation here.

"I have followed the case of the Chicago anarchists, as they call themselves. Many of the wrongs they denounce are things for which our forefathers would have fought and bled, for which I, an American of many generations, would be ready to fight. The trouble comes in, however, in the language, in the method, in the manner these men present their grievances. They state their grievances in a foreign tongue, in a foreign press. They state them in foreign terms, in a foreign psychology. They give their kernel of justice a shell that is unattractive to the American eye, and the resentment toward the shell is unconsciously extended to the kernel itself."

Again there was a pause. But Fred was staring ahead of him, letting the words of the old Yankee sink in his mind. The old man observed this with a smile of satisfaction and continued:

"To come to things nearer home, there is your father. I have great admiration for him. I know him to be honest and earnest. And I know his ideas are right. I agree with most of them; perhaps if I understood your father's language

I would agree with all of them. How can one take exception to the truth when one understands it? Here we are in a country whose government is scarcely more than a hundred years old. We are on a continent that is virgin soil. Two hundred years back the ills of the Old World, greed, corruption, caste lines, with the abhorrence of work on the one hand and the desire to enslave whole tribes of people and to live off their labor on the other, were utterly unknown on this continent. We have here a country of vast resources that are still untapped. The first immigrants to this country came to seek freedom, to seek justice, to propagate the ideas of equality, to live and let live, to found new El Dorados of human peace and happiness.

"And now, what has happened? Men have come here and have transplanted, and adapted to the new conditions, the Mephistophelian system of exploitation which is current on the old continent. They have built factories and shops here, they are operating mines and mills, not to keep the wants of all supplied, but for personal enrichment. They operate not on the principle of justice, but on the principle of might. They turned this country into a dog-eat-dog world. The wages they pay are arbitrary and the worker must live accordingly. If he fights back he gets a little more; if he is quiet they may try to reduce his meager stipend. In a land which is the youngest country on earth we have more windowless rooms, greater congestion, more poverty, consumption, crime, insanity than are to be seen in the cities of the Old World. And all this has been built up in the space of a generation. It is being built and aggravated daily. This poverty and want and horrible lists of suicide are all man-made. It is proper that men should protest against such a system. Indeed, it is the pith of New World civilization

that such wrongs should be protested against, should be denounced, uprooted. But denounce them as Americans, in the American language, with American address. Your father, the Haymarket prisoners in Chicago, all of the German socialists in this country, are attacking real evils. Their cause is just, but they fail to make it appear so to the American public. They have reversed the sequence of things. They should have learned our ways, our language, should have become a part of us first and started in converting us to their ideas afterwards. Then too they might have Americanized their ideas a little, they might have presented them to us in American cut garments. 'When in Rome do as the Romans.'"

The following Sunday afternoon Conrad addressed a mass meeting in behalf of the Haymarket prisoners. Fred was in the hall listening to his father's speech.

"I am not an anarchist," Conrad had said; "in fact, I am a bitter enemy of the anarchist philosophy. But these men in Chicago were not sentenced to be hanged for their professing an anarchist view of society, but for being representatives of the working class. The courts had not proved that they had committed an anarchist act. Even the police dared not credit these men with the actual throwing of the bomb in the Haymarket. If they are hanged it will be for championing the cause of the workingmen. If they are hanged it will be because they have made a too persistent fight for the eight-hour day with which employers have no sympathy. If they are hanged it will be because the capitalist class wants them to serve as a warning to other workingmen, to other leaders of the oppressed and the downtrodden —"

Throughout the speech women wept, men sat in a daze. The plight of seven laboring men, immigrants like themselves, had come home.

When Fred picked up the English papers the next morning, he found a description of the meeting to the length of a column. The reporter told of a "wild-eyed, frenzied crowd, shouting, gesticulating, threatening death and destruction to the authorities if they dared to carry out the law and hang their comrades." Mention was made of his father. But all the reporter saw in Gottfried Conrad's speech was "a harangue in the German vernacular."

Fred pondered long over this line. His father told him that nothing else could be expected from the capitalist press. But he was wondering what the reporter might have said if the speech had been made in English, by an American. Henceforth he deliberately and completely cut the "German vernacular" from his speech, much to the surprise of his fellow workers in the shop and in the union. At home he had been speaking English for years now.

Fred now visited the old decorator often. One afternoon Mr. Gardner closed his shop and led his visitor upstairs into a little study. In that room Fred found several diplomas and certificates from a leading college which gave Mr. Gardner the right to teach. He learned that Mr. Gardner had been a teacher prior to the Civil War. His injured thigh, which old Gardner spoke of jocularly as his "war decoration," made it necessary for him to give up teaching and go into some other occupation. The painting and decorating business had been in the family for years. It was an easy matter to step into it. His store was giving him and his wife a livelihood. And that was all they needed.

"And these are my companions," Mr. Gardner laughed as he pointed along the wall to shelf upon shelf of books. Fred examined two or three of them. The names of the writers were new to him and the books were different from anything he had ever read or seen. A feeling of humility came over him.

Fall had set in early that year. The first week in September it began to rain and for three weeks in succession wind and storm raged unabated. Then, just as people were resigning themselves to the death of summer and were beginning to take an inventory of last year's winter garments, summer returned. It came back overnight and greeted the city on a Sunday morning with dazzling sunshine. By noon the tenements spilled out their inhabitants by scores of thousands into the parks, amusement places, the seashore.

Fred Conrad, too, would make the most of that October Sunday. As he had worked until five that morning, he was not up until one-thirty, and it was nearly three o'clock in the afternoon when he started out for Central Park. Mr. Gardner was leaning back in a rocker in front of his store enjoying the sunshine. Fred stopped to talk to him.

"Out for a stroll?" Mr. Gardner asked.

"Yes," said Fred; "I thought I would take a look at Central Park again; there may not be many nice Sundays left."

"No, there may not be," the old man agreed.

Fred made a move as if to continue on his walk when a girl stepped out of the hallway leading to the living-room of the Gardner family. Upon perceiving a stranger, she halted.

"Come right over, Elsie; don't be scared of Fred here; he is almost a part of the family." Mr. Gardner was smil-

ing, and as the girl came up he introduced them to each other. "My niece, Elsie Whitney, and this is Mr. Conrad, our neighbor."

Fred extended his hand with a "Pleased to meet you."

"Fearfully warm out here, isn't it?" the girl broke the silence which followed the greeting.

"Yes, it is warm," said Fred. He was looking straight at her. It was wonderful to be addressed as a man, to be looked upon as a man by a woman. He was in the habit of still considering himself a boy.

Mr. Gardner infused life into the conversation.

"My niece," he said by way of explanation, "has come from Vermont only yesterday." And turning to the girl he continued: "After you get used to the town, Elsie, you won't mind the heat so — nor the elevated either."

This last the old man said with a twinkle. The girl suppressed a giggle.

"No," she said, and Fred could not tell whether she was mocking or serious, "no, Uncle, I'll never get used to the elevated, and I'll never let you take me on it again."

Mr. Gardner laughed as if he enjoyed the joke hugely. He was telling Fred how he had sprung a surprise on the girl the previous day. He met her at the railway station and took her home on the elevated. He thought a journey over the roofs of New York would amuse her. Instead it gave her the shivers.

"I'll give you just about a month," the uncle continued, "and you will know New York as well as you know Main Street in Belfair, and you will like it. Everybody feels about New York the way you do when they first come here."

"I suppose so," said Miss Whitney wistfully. A reminiscent look came into her eyes. She seemed to be visualizing something. Fred wondered whether she was thinking

of her home, or whether it was her future in New York that she was painting with her eyes in space. Suddenly he spoke.

"You have not seen the town yet?"

"No," said the girl absently. Fred continued hastily, as if wishing to have it over with:

"I'm going to Central Park. If — do you want to come with me?"

He was amazed at his own boldness. He would have swallowed the words if he could. But it was too late. The girl meantime had cast a perplexed look at her uncle and the latter answered for her:

"Certainly go with Mr. Conrad. Very good of you, Fred. Central Park will be worth seeing to-day."

"I'll be down directly," the girl smiled back to Fred as she ran up the stairs to the living-rooms.

Fred, who remained alone with the old man, was confused. Mr. Gardner was not angry with him, that was certain. His heart beat furiously and then it stood still. He felt that he had taken a momentous step.

Mr. Gardner, speaking commonplaces, took his mind off his now thrilling, now embarrassing thoughts.

"All right, Mr. Conrad," and the girl stood by his side, her face rosy under the drooping summer hat. On her arm hung her jacket.

Fred took the jacket from her. Courage surged through his veins. She took him for a man; he would be a man, not a boy, not a child.

"So long," Mr. Gardner called after them, and with a sly solemnity added, addressing both, "And mind the elevated!"

It was a day of days. The mantle of boyhood had fallen from Fred's shoulders. The thrill of his manhood was coursing through his veins. He was a man now with a

man's strength. In the many Sundays when strolling alone through Central Park he had observed the manners of men, of boys, as they walked through the park with women, girls. He had studied and watched those things abstractedly, merely to keep his mind busy. It had never occurred to him that a time would come when he might stand in need of just such niceties. Such things seemed so remote from him. Now all these niceties of conduct came to him like a chant of triumph. He was not a stranger to the ways of the world. From the moment he transferred the girl's jacket from her arm to his, he was showering her with attentions. He took her arm at every street crossing and helped her up the sidewalk. At first a queer sensation would run through him at such familiarities. But he was fortified every time with the thought that this was the proper thing to do. In the Park proper his attentions appeared quite the thing. Miss Whitney, who to begin with had felt rather strange at the attentions of the young man whom she had known scarcely an hour, was more at ease here. It was the city — that was to be expected. City young men were so much more polite, so much more refined than the boys of Belfair.

Fred was solicitous. He would not let her get tired, he was always on the lookout for a bench or nice spot to sit down. He had an eye, too, for the lemonade stands in case she was thirsty. Then he suddenly discovered that it was seven o'clock. And in the manner in which he had often enviously watched other young men gaily escort their ladies to the pavilion where they served sandwiches and pies and coffee and ice-cream, he escorted Miss Whitney, and there watched her eat as if she were a sick child and her life depended upon taking a taste of everything that he ordered.

They found a bench and sat down. The moon sent furtive glances through the branches of the tree as if a trifle anx-

ious about the inexperienced couple and fearing that they might not take their full share of the joy of living that evening. But if such were the moon's misgivings, they were entirely unwarranted, for Fred and Elsie spent a delightful evening together. They talked of many things. She of her life in the country town, of the interminably long and quiet evenings, the dull Sundays, the dreams and pining for the city, which the old resented but which was the only thing that kept the hearts of the young people bright and warm.

Her frank wonderment filled him with hope and a little, too, with pride. He was born in the city. There was much he would be able to show her. He thought gratefully of his father, who had always urged him to visit the museums, aquariums, the zoological gardens, and the like. Gottfried Conrad saw in these things education for his son, while Fred now anticipated the thrills which the sight of these things would bring her, and was suffocating with the joy these anticipations were giving him.

It had grown late and they started for home. They were tired and happy. Along the way he pointed out various buildings to her and scarcely noticed how time went. When the car reached their corner both instinctively regretted that such a pleasant evening had to be broken up.

Mr. Gardner had been waiting for them and not alone. He was standing near the entrance to the Conrad home speaking to Mrs. Conrad.

"Here they come," Mrs. Conrad said joyously at the sight of the couple. She observed her son before he noticed her. The change in him from boy to man was clear to her on the instant and sent a long expected thrill through her heart. There was no need to introduce Miss Whitney to her. Mr. Gardner had been talking about the girl just as she and Fred were approaching. Fred's mother extended her hand

to the girl warmly. She asked her whether she liked New York. Miss Whitney felt like leaning upon somebody's chest and crying — that was how she felt about New York. But that she could not do or say, so she dropped into prose and said yes, she liked New York, and everything was commonplace again.

When Fred entered the house, followed by his mother, the sense of his new-found self had not left him. He was, in fact, more conscious of it than ever. But with that manhood there had come over him a strange sadness, an unwonted melancholy that was torturesome and pleasant.

His mother was putting his supper on the table, but he was not hungry. She tried to speak to him, but he only answered in monosyllables. With palpitating heart she attempted to get at the events of the day. Did he have a pleasant time? "Yes, very pleasant," he answered, and pretended to be very tired. His father had not yet returned from a meeting and he was glad of it.

He began to undress. He liked the sensation of getting up at six o'clock Monday morning and having the whole day to himself. As he was unlacing his shoes, he heard his mother sigh. He looked up at her quickly and was a little startled. He had never noticed before: She was an old woman.

CHAPTER VIII

FRED MAKES A SPEECH

LOCAL UNION NO. 9 of the Bakers' Amalgamated Association had nearly twelve hundred members and every one of these was in the hall that Sunday afternoon, despite the bitter cold. The union was on the eve of a crisis. For two years it had had an agreement with the baker bosses specifying the hours of work, wages, sanitary and other conditions in the bakeshops. The contract was to expire within ten days and the employers refused to renew it.

It was the first crisis in union affairs at which Fred Conrad sat as a member with an equal voice. The meeting began at two-thirty in the afternoon. At the opening of the session the business agent had outlined in a few words his fruitless negotiations with the baker bosses. It was five o'clock now and Fred Conrad was listening wearily to the second of the two "principal" speakers of the occasion. One of the speakers was an associate editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung;* the other was the ex-secretary of a socialist Local in Germany, who had been in the United States only a short time.

For more than two hours these men had been hurling oratorical javelins against the wall of capitalism which was surrounding modern society, and denouncing wage slavery, rent interest and profit. They vied with one another in their display of erudition. They invoked Lassalle, they quoted Marx. They traced the wrongs of the working class from the day when "Adam wove and Eve span." They delved into

Roman history and resurrected the great rebel Spartacus. They tossed back and forth such words as Feudalism, the Wealth of Nations, Materialism. They conjured up the Shades of Proudhon and Saint-Simon to bear witness to the injustice of the system of private property. They called upon the workers to rise to a man, "rise like lions" to abolish capitalist society and inaugurate the cooperative commonwealth. The throng applauded eagerly every time the speaker made a telling point.

Fred was fidgety and to hide his impatience was studying the audience. He knew most of the men by sight if not to speak to. He had seen them at meetings, meetings which his father had addressed and at which Gottfried had said precisely the same things the speaker was saying now. These men must have heard the same statements, the same denunciations, the same proof of the wrong and iniquity of private property for the hundredth time. And still they were listening eagerly to it, they were applauding these speeches and sentiments. What a tiresome spectacle! What a waste of time and energy! He knew all of these men to be socialists. Each of them had long been converted to the theories the speakers were expounding. Where was the sense in trying to convert people who have long been converted? Didn't the speakers see the uselessness of their propaganda here? Was not the audience aware of it? Instead of saying these things over to themselves for the hundredth time, why did not both speakers and audience go out and try to gain *new* recruits to their ideas? Why did not they try to convert the great American masses, if they really meant to accomplish the economic and social changes they were preaching, if they were serious in the war they were declaring upon modern society? Were they all mere dreamers? Were they mere children in the practical affairs of life?

He checked his meditations. Was he not going too far in his criticisms? His father had warned him not to fall too much under the influence of his Yankee neighbor. Old Man Gardner no doubt was honest and well meaning, but he had no first-hand knowledge of industrial conditions, Gottfried had explained to him. He had never worked in a factory. Gardner's life and viewpoint went back to an older generation, a generation reared in small American towns, a generation which knew nothing of the relentless tyranny and exploitation of the factory system in the modern city, in New York. It was all very well for Gardner to be philosophical about things, to be critical of his German neighbors, to chide them for not acquiring manners, polish. He had no children working in sweat-shops. He never experienced the lash of the foreman, he never knew the petty tricks of employers for squeezing out more work while at the same time bringing down your wages. Before the poor can acquire manners they must have bread, they must have better homes, more air, more sunlight, they must have a little something saved, so as not to be haunted by the specter of unemployment and starvation.

"With all his humanitarianism, and his love of fair play," Gottfried once said to his son, "Mr. Gardner is himself a member of the exploiting class. He has never worked with his hands. It is easy to be calm and philosophical when the shoe pinches somebody else's foot."

Fred recalled these words of his father now. He was trying to be just to the men to whose ranks he had only recently been admitted. Nevertheless, impatience was rankling in him. His American directness was asserting itself. No, he was not altogether wrong. His impatience was justified. Why could not these speakers reserve their addresses for some other time? They could be delivered at any other time just

as well. Right now the union had important business to settle. A strike was imminent: it was inevitable. They should have employed these hours toward making the strike effective. Most of the recent strikes in the colony had been miserable failures, fiascos, because they were mismanaged. He was shaken out of his ruminations by a storm of applause. The last of the two speakers had finished. Fred noted the expression of relief that came into the chairman's face. The president of the union, Theodore Lange, presided. He was now rapping for order furiously, eager to get down to business.

Lange minced no words. The refusal of the bosses to renew the agreement with the union could have but one meaning, he said: the employers were out to break the union. There was but one response the union could make — strike. He would appoint a committee to visit the employers. If they did not sign the agreement before next Sunday the union would resort to the only alternative and order the men to quit work.

The chairman appointed the committee, three men who stood high in the councils of the organization. He then looked about the hall. If there were no further questions, or any other business, the meeting would be declared adjourned.

"A point of information, Mr. Chairman." Fred Conrad was up from his seat. His words electrified the audience. It was the first time a member had addressed the chairman in English. Most of the men spoke English after a fashion in street-cars, in stores, or wherever else they came in contact with Americans. Many of them even spoke it at home; they were compelled by their American-reared children to answer them in English now and then. But in their societies, in their

lodges and unions, they spoke German. It was not merely that they could express themselves better in their native tongue. They were ashamed to speak English among themselves — it seemed to them clownish to drop their native tongue and attempt to speak in a foreign language which they knew but imperfectly. They did not mind exposing their accent to an Irishman or a Yankee, but they feared to expose it to one of their own kind. Germans who "tried to play Yankee" were burlesqued in the papers and on the stage.

All eyes, therefore, were riveted upon young Conrad, who seemed not at all conscious of having done anything extraordinary. He was accustomed to think in English even when listening to speeches in German. The chairman, Theodore Lange, was one of the younger men, and was pretty well Americanized. He quickly overcame a momentary embarrassment and now that the ice was broken he answered Fred likewise in English.

"What is your point of information, Brother Conrad?" he asked.

It was the first time Fred had been addressed as "Brother Conrad." It was the first time he was addressed as a colleague by a man twice his age. He was the equal of all of these men now. It was a glorious feeling. But he had no time to surrender himself to the sensation of joy which his own self-assertion and the recognition of it by others was giving him. The chairman had asked him a question. He was answering it:

"My point of information is this: If a strike is called, this is the last meeting at which preparations for such strike should be made, is it not?"

The eyes of the entire audience were now fixed upon the

slender youth who was questioning the chair. Had Fred spoken German he would have had scant attention. His English speech distinguished him.

"I don't quite grasp your question, Brother Conrad," the chair answered. "Will you please state it a little more clearly?"

"My question," said Fred, "is this: What preparations have been made to meet the situations and difficulties that are likely to arise if a strike is called? The contracts expire in ten days. If they are not renewed before the end of this week the strike will be ordered at next Sunday's meeting. There will be no time to make preparations for the strike then. The time to make such preparations is between now and then, between to-day and next Sunday."

The chairman surveyed the crowd as if seeking light in the faces of his audience. But there was no word coming from any one. The audience was looking from Fred to the chairman and from the chairman to Fred.

"What are the preparations you have in mind, Brother Conrad?" the chairman asked, still dubiously.

Fred's answer came readily. He had had it in his mind for some time.

"A lawyer," he said. "The first thing we ought to do is hire a lawyer."

"Will Brother Conrad please step up to the platform, so we can all hear him?" The voice was that of August Miller, a well-known figure in the German Colony and a friend of Fred's father, Gottfried Conrad.

"On the platform!" Several others approved Miller's suggestion, and Fred made his way to the rostrum.

"What I wish to say," Fred resumed after the palpitating of his heart had settled to normal in the half minute which the journey from his seat to the platform occupied, "is this:

We ought to get a lawyer to look after our interests. There has not been a strike in this city recently that has not been interfered with by the police. Now there are certain rights which every one of us, which every one in this country has, such rights as free speech, free assembly. Any man has a right to patrol the street — that is what picketing amounts to. When the police annoy a man who is walking along the street peacefully, they are violating the law. In every recent strike the police have curtailed these rights of the men. This must not happen in the next strike. We ought to know just what our rights as citizens are. We ought to know just what we have a right to do, and what not. A lawyer could tell us that. And when a policeman violates our rights we ought to know that he is violating them and tell our lawyer. Let him take action and bring the offending officer to justice. The policeman has no more right to break the law than a striker has. We live in a country governed by laws. It is imperative, to my mind, that we have a lawyer to advise us with regard to our rights and to warn us away from interfering with the rights of others. That's all."

It was a remark of Mr. Gardner's that Fred had developed into this little speech, and he thought of the old Yankee as he was descending from the platform.

August Miller, in the rear of the hall, clapped his hands and in a moment the entire building resounded with applause for Fred. When the hand-clapping subsided, the chairman, addressing Fred, who was now in his seat among the audience, asked whether he wanted to put his remarks in the form of a motion.

"You can take it as a motion," Fred replied.

A score of men in various parts of the hall seconded the motion and when it was carried the chairman concluded:

"And now I appoint Brother Conrad a member of the

committee which is to take up negotiations with the employers and I widen the scope of the committee so that it may undertake such preparations for a strike as Brother Conrad has outlined."

There was another outburst of applause. The meeting was over, and men now crowded about Fred, shook hands with him, praised and approved his ideas, and all of this approval somehow came in English. Fred was embarrassed at heart, but he did not show it. The training in facing audiences which his father had given him by taking him on the platform with him ever since he was a little boy, now stood Fred Conrad in good stead. Still he was greatly relieved when he extricated himself from the crowd and started for home.

Gottfried had not yet returned from the meeting which he was to address and Fred was glad of it. He wanted a few minutes to himself to think it over, to visualize all that had taken place that afternoon. He settled down in a rocker and tried to recall just what he had said and how he had acted on the platform. He could find no fault with himself. Everything had gone well. He had not only stated his point, but it was carried, and what's more he was now a member of the committee which was to conduct negotiations with the bosses. To-morrow at eleven o'clock in the morning the committee would hold a special session. The president of the union had reminded him to be on hand at the meeting as they were leaving the hall together.

Besides the honor there was another significance in this thing — a significance which had just occurred to him. The men who were appointed on such committees were not supposed to work in the shop during the time they were working for the union. The union paid them the wages they earned in the shop and even their expenses. This meant that for

a whole week he would not be working at night, he would have the nights to himself — he would see Elsie every evening.

And then he forgot everything else and thought of Elsie. How beautiful she had become in the three months she had been in New York! She had unfolded like a flower. Everything she saw in the city thrilled her. And whatever she had seen had been in his company. He had taken her out every Sunday. And now he would be free in the evening a whole week in succession — he must rush to see her at once. Supper? He looked about and saw his father enter.

At a glance Fred realized that something very pleasant had happened to his father. He, too, must have scored a great triumph that afternoon, he thought. And his surmise was right. Only the triumph which Gottfried Conrad scored was his son's triumph. August Miller, who was responsible for hustling Fred up on the platform to make his little speech there before the entire union membership, had stopped in at the hall where Gottfried Conrad had spoken and congratulated him upon Fred's achievement.

"You can be proud of your boy," Miller had said after telling of Fred's speech and his appointment to the strike committee; "he is a born leader, a chip of the old block."

In the three blocks from the hall to his home two other men, bakers who knew him, stopped Gottfried Conrad to tell him about his son, how he had leaped into leadership at a stroke.

The words of praise for his Fred were ringing in Conrad's ears as they sat down to the evening meal. His face beamed. From time to time he would send furtive glances at his son, which caused Fred to suspect that his father might have heard something of the afternoon's happenings. Conrad was waiting for the boy to speak, to tell him. But Fred was not

making the least reference to the meeting. They talked commonplaces. Fred was looking at the clock constantly. He was anxious to get out — to Elsie.

As they rose from the table Gottfried could contain himself no longer.

"I hear you have been appointed on the committee which is to handle the next strike," Gottfried said.

"Yes," Fred replied calmly, "they added my name to the list."

Gottfried would have liked to hear in detail about the little speech which his son had made, but Fred was noncommittal on that. And the reticence of his son suddenly assumed a significance in the father's eyes. That was the spirit of true leadership — to make light of its own achievements, to look forward to newer conquests instead of basking in the glory of the old ones. Yes, his Lassalle was showing real character. He would be heard from.

When Fred left the house, Gottfried Conrad shook up the fire, threw in a few coals and, bringing his chair close to the stove, sat down. He was not going out that evening to any meeting. That was triumph enough for one day. He picked up the paper as a pretense for staying home, but he did not read. He did not even open it. He sat rapt in visions.

CHAPTER IX

ELSIE

ELSIE WHITNEY was six months older than Fred. She was the youngest of eight children, but only one of them was living besides herself — her brother George. The others had died, some in infancy and some later. One of them, a sister, had died five years back, at the age of twenty-one, and this sent her mother to a comparatively early grave. Mrs. Whitney was only fifty-two when she died.

Mathew Whitney, Elsie's father, owned a blacksmith shop on the outskirts of Belfair and had been assisted in the management of the place by his only son ever since the boy was twelve years old. After his wife's death, Mr. Whitney's attacks of rheumatism came on with increasing frequency. For two and a half years he still looked after the shop, though his son did all the work. Then he was laid up for six weeks in succession. It was feared he would die; he was in the sixties. But he recovered. When he again left his bed, however, his career as a blacksmith was over. His muscles would no longer obey him.

From the day her mother died the house had rested upon Elsie's shoulders. It was monotonous work, but she did it without a murmur. Her responsibilities sobered her beyond her years. She was critical of her surroundings, and girls her own age seemed to her mere children in comparison with herself. What did they know of life's bitterness and hardships? These girls could still make their dreams of the future rhyme, as it were, with their little town; not she. There

was no future in Belfair for her. Her girl friends were longing for homes of their own. She had one. She had been keeping house for three years. She knew what it meant. It was a dull business. Marraige would add to the routine, but she doubted whether it could bring her happiness — in Belfair. She knew all the boys in the town — the available ones. They were all good "hewers of wood and drawers of water" — she had carried off many prizes in the Sunday-school and knew her Bible well — but that was all they were. She had not known many people outside her little town, but she knew, she felt, that there were somehow other people in the world, people who did things, people whose life was not one round of monotonous plodding. She read books occasionally. In the books the men were so irresistible — they could just make a girl's heart melt. She would do anything for such men. But these men were mostly in New York. Ah, New York! She thought of it wistfully for hours, dreamed of it. . . .

And then it happened, as it always happens. Brother George got himself engaged to the very girl his sister would least have him marry. She and Mary Brennon never would tolerate each other. She would not stay in the same house with Mary. But the house was George's, he was the only one who worked and he was twenty-eight, and he knew his own mind. So Elsie thought and thought for a long time and then opened the chest where her mother had kept her letters and family heirlooms. After a prolonged search she found a faded scrap of paper with the address of her mother's brother, her uncle Warren G. Gardner, in New York. It was a week before she had composed the kind of letter she thought proper.

Her mother had never said anything derogatory about her husband's family, about the Whitneys. But there was a

memory rooted in Elsie's brain, a memory of a sad look at times, and of a disdainful curl of her mother's lip when she and her husband would talk family. Though Mrs. Whitney would never say it, Elsie was certain that her mother's family was superior to her father's. The Gardners were nicer people. Elsie had heard, too, though for the life of her she could not recall who told her this, that *she* took after the Gardners, while George took more after his father's family. Whenever she had a run-in with her brother she was more than willing to believe and even proclaim this difference between them.

The letter which she received from her uncle in New York by return post scattered Elsie's poise to the winds. She could hardly finish it. She wept and then she kissed it and folded it against her breast. It was as if her mother had come back to life and was taking her tired little head in her arms, and soothing her and assuring her that everything was well, that everything would come out right. The superiority of the Gardner family spoke through every line of her uncle's letter. She had no longer any doubt of it now.

Mr. Gardner welcomed his niece with open arms. They were not rich, he wrote, just getting along. But she was more than welcome to what they had. He had often, since his sister's death, wished that he might have her, his sister's child, with him. Yes, he — they would be indebted to Elsie if she come to live with them. They were rather lonely in New York. It would brighten their old age to have their niece near them. They would do all they could to take the place of her parents to her — of her dead mother. She was to write at once when she would come.

From the moment Fred Conrad took the jacket from Elsie's arm on that Sunday of their first meeting when he was taking

her to Central Park, he had become Elsie's mentor. Much of the tender solicitude which characterized his relations with his mother, now with a single stroke went over to the girl. On the first afternoon of their meeting Elsie had made known to him her purpose not to be a burden upon her uncle. She would be self-supporting. She meant to go to work at something as soon as she had a look at the town and saw what she could do. She had asked Fred about the occupations of girls in the city, the conditions of work, pay, and the like. But he did not know any girls intimately and could not tell her about these things offhand. He would try to find out, and he did. Whenever he heard something about girls and their work he reported it to Elsie at the first opportunity.

Elsie took this interest of Fred without any embarrassment or diffidence largely because of the familiarity with which her uncle had introduced him to her when they first met. Mr. Gardner had spoken of Fred Conrad as "almost" a member of the household. That at once removed all barriers between them and put them on a footing of friendship, almost relationship. The name Fred was constantly on her lips and frequently, in speaking to him, Elsie had difficulty in keeping it back and addressing him as Mr. Conrad.

For a month in succession after her arrival Fred saw her every day for a little while in the afternoon. On Sundays he would invariably spend the evenings with her, strolling through the streets when weather permitted and at home or in a music hall when it was bad. Then Miss Whitney found a place in a store and thereafter his meetings were reduced to once a week — on Sundays only.

After a fight of three weeks the strike was won. The baker bosses not only renewed the old agreement, but even a few additional concessions were gained by the men. Not a

small share of this victory was ascribed to the influence and personality of Fred Conrad. As a member of the strike committee he had been invaluable. He had given this strike a tenor which no other bakers' strike had had hitherto. His reputation among the union members was established. He was talked about throughout the German colony.

As he had suggested, a lawyer was engaged by the union. The strikers were told just exactly what their rights were in the matter of patrolling the streets as pickets. During the first days of the strike Fred would stroll through the strike zone and wherever he perceived trouble between the strikers and a policeman he appeared on the scene and introduced himself to the officer as a member of the strike committee that was appointed to see that order was maintained by the union men. He was anxious to cooperate with the officer in all that pertained to maintaining order, he explained.

The tall American youth, speaking a clear-cut English, often much clearer than the officer spoke, had a peculiar effect upon the police. They were accustomed to handle foreign-speaking strikers like a herd of cattle, which meant to shoo them off the sidewalk like vagabonds, to bulldoze and intimidate them. They could not do it now. Word somehow got around quickly that the strikers had a lawyer, and that the lawyer had instructed them just what things they could or could not do, and that the policeman who infringed upon the legal rights of any one of them would be held legally responsible by the union. It was something new and had a dampening effect upon the zeal of many an officer.

During the weeks the strike was on, Fred had visited Elsie every evening. At times these visits were short, lasting no more than a quarter of an hour. Their very shortness, however, would add to the intensity of their delight. It was a joy to see her, to talk to her. He waited eagerly

twenty-four hours for these short visits; he was dreaming of them. The busier he was, the greater the demands upon him, the more poignant his longing for the girl was.

Time and again when he was in a committee meeting at which strike measures were decided on, his mind would wander to the little parlor in Old Man Gardner's home. The thought of Elsie traveled side by side with whatever he did or talked of or thought. Now these delightful nightly visits were ended. He would have to content himself with seeing her once a week again. But he could not content himself. Weekly visits to her would no longer suffice. He was pining for the girl. His yearning for her was wrecking him. From Monday morning until Saturday night he was sickly, morbid. He began to feel pains, in the head, the groin, the chest. His parents were worried. But he would say nothing, would not listen to talk of seeing a doctor. In the middle of March he broke down. He caught a severe cold and was ordered to bed. He was laid up ten days. It was another week before he was able to go to work. Mr. Gardner and Elsie came to see him twice. By that time, he was able to visit them. And then it was spring.

It was the last Sunday in April. The balm of spring was in the air even on the congested East Side of New York. It came with the breeze from the East River; it came from the distant fields of Long Island and the bare tracts of grass-covered ground in Brooklyn. Elsie was restless all morning. She was thinking of home, of Belfair. The gusts of wind sounded to her like the blowing of the bellows in her father's blacksmith shop. The house and garden danced before her eyes and her heart ached. Mary was there now, in the place where she had been, where her mother had been before her.

It was afternoon. George and his wife were out riding in the buggy. Father was left alone. He hobbled about the yard aimlessly. His body was bent, twisted with rheumatism. His eyes were bleared, as if hung over with a transparent curtain. How horrible old age was. What a contrast the distorted human body offered to the freshness and delights of nature.

She was not aware for some time that she was crying. Only when her heart had, of a sudden, experienced a soothing ease, a feeling of tender melting and soft relaxation, did she become conscious of her tears. But she did not try to stem them. She felt as if she were in somebody's arms, resting, relaxing, swinging into eternity to her mother, to the angels. The tears were kind to her. She sobbed out her thankfulness aloud to them. And there was no one to disturb her. . . .

When he called after dinner, Fred was struck with the delicacy and serenity of her features. As she stood there in her simple linen dress, which she wore that afternoon for the first time, she looked to him as if she had stepped out of the past, a child of the mist, of the clouds, an Evangeline, a daughter of the Pilgrims. A line began to buzz in his ears, a line from a poem he had once learned in school, "She was a phantom of delight." He had never been able to get a good picture out of that line. He had it now. It was Elsie, that the poet had meant.

"We'll go into the country to-day," he whispered to her, and he could see her thrill. She had been aching to go out to the country. She was on the point of asking him to take her there. He had divined her longings. Her eyes sent forth waves of silent gratitude.

But the afternoon was short. By the time they reached the Jersey coast it was nearly four o'clock. They strolled for

some time through the fields. Crowds of people were strolling, shouting, singing. There were couples like themselves. They clung to each other and spoke in whispers.

It was growing late. Everybody was turning back toward the city. They followed. They went down a hill, climbed another. They panted for breath, but not from tiredness. Near the edge of a hill that was sloping right into the Hudson River they found a big stone. It seemed to be made for two to sit on. And many had sat there on that stone; there were still fresh tracks on the wet ground.

They sat down and looked out upon the city across the Hudson — New York. In the water steamers were gliding. Ferries were crossing and recrossing, their whistles shrieking fear, warning through the air.

The sun was setting. Its glittering red beams were falling across the houses on Riverside Drive, falling into the water of the Hudson. They were laying the beautiful spring Sunday to rest. In the morning it would be work again for Elsie, and to-morrow at the same hour he would be entering the bakeshop for a night's labor.

Fred was looking straight ahead. He was listening. He could hear Elsie breathe. The wind was carrying her breath to him, the fragrance of her. . . . He was faint. . . . His whole life danced before his eyes. What a painful mess it had been! At first his sick brother, then his mother with doctors, always doctors, dispensaries, moaning. . . . And then the shop which had robbed him of his nights. For the moment he forgot the girl beside him. A pity seized him, a pity for himself. He could weep for himself, for his lost youth, for his wasted life. . . . What was the meaning of it all? To what end? He had passed a cemetery once. Row after row of little mounds, six by three, with the grass growing green over them. He gave a deep sigh.

"What is it, Fred?"

Even before she caught his look she flushed. It was the first time she had called him by his first name. . . . She had been alarmed by his sinister face. He seemed oblivious of everything. In her excitement she gripped his arm. . . .

Fred was awake. . . . He was aware of her presence as he had never been before. She had called him by his first name! She gazed at him with eyes full of tender solicitude. He could not hold all this happiness alone; his heart would burst.

"Elsie," he whispered. His arms wound themselves about her waist, her shoulders. He buried his yearning eyes and face on her breast.

It came to Gottfried as an afterthought as he stood at his bench in the shop, and it staggered him. It would be appalling if it happened. . . . And yet it very likely would happen, was sure to happen, unless he took action. Elsie and the Gardners were making all arrangements for the wedding. It would be held at the Gardner home. Elsie had gone to Sunday-school when a little girl. She came from a New England town. Most everybody belonged to a church in these small places. They would be sure to invite a minister to perform the marriage ceremony.

It was three o'clock. Gottfried worked until six. He thought of quitting an hour earlier and going home to see Fred, to ask him, but changed his mind. He must not act too hastily in the matter. There would be plenty of time to see Fred. The wedding of his son and Elsie would not take place for three weeks yet.

As he worked on mechanically he took stock of his son. He presumed that Fred was a free-thinker like himself. He had never heard anything to the contrary from Fred. The

boy never went to church, never showed any interest for matters associated with religion. He was indifferent and Gottfried thought it best to leave him alone. He could not expect Fred to be an active or even rabid church-hater. The church did not enter into his son's life with the same oppressive poignancy it did in his own. The church in America altogether was so unlike the church of the Old World. Like everything else it was new here. It had none of the Bastille-like cathedrals and monasteries that it had in Germany. The clergy had none of the arrogance here that it had in the Old World. His son's neutrality in religious matters was on the whole fairly satisfying to Conrad.

But this was a different situation. One could not be neutral in such a matter. It would be disappointing, it would be, indeed, a humiliation if the Gardners and Elsie could succeed in forcing upon his son, upon the Conrad family, a church wedding, a wedding ceremony performed by a minister and all the other religious trimmings that went with it. . . .

He put the question up to Fred bluntly. His son was taken aback. He had never thought of how the ceremony was to be performed. It was a matter of no consequence to him. He had been going about in a state of blissful excitement in anticipation of his union with Elsie. All the trappings pertaining to this union he had put out of his mind as things that were of no concern to him, a man. Let Elsie and the Gardners bother with these!

Fred now listened to his father wide-eyed. Gottfried expected his son, of course, to go to the city hall and there have a civil marriage performed. There could be no thought of inviting a clergyman and dragging the church into the matter.

"I'll talk to Elsie and see what arrangements they are making," Fred replied. He knew how opposed his father

was to anything that savored of religion. He was indifferent to such things, but his father no doubt had good reason for hating the church and its emissaries. And he would not hurt his father in such matters, he would not!

It was not easy to broach the subject to Elsie. She was as gay as a lark. She had given up her work and was at home fitting out her modest trousseau. She was consulting constantly with Mrs. Gardner and her uncle.

When Fred found a favorable moment and gathered up the courage for it, he approached the subject of the wedding ceremony. She — they did not expect to have a priest perform it?

Elsie looked at him wide-eyed. What did he mean? — she did not understand him. The ceremony would be performed by a minister — how else?

She was worlds removed from ideas like those entertained by Gottfried Conrad. Fred saw at once that it would be hopeless to try to argue her out of a church ceremony. He had previously talked with Mr. Gardner and acquainted himself with the atmosphere of the small New England town. A civil marriage of the kind that was performed in the city hall of New York by the thousands was utterly unknown in these small towns. Marriage was a church, family, almost town, affair. Nothing short of a marriage ceremony performed by a minister would satisfy Elsie. It was a case of violating his father's principles or throwing Elsie completely off her mental balance. With her bringing up, with her small-town prejudices, a civil marriage would be equivalent to no marriage at all. She would never consent to it. It would be cruel to ask her to consent to it.

When Fred explained the situation to his father, Gottfried turned livid. He read the inevitable in his son's explanation. He had no thought of reproaching Fred: the

boy was uncomfortable enough as it was. It was an unfortunate combination of circumstances, very unfortunate.

For days Gottfried Conrad hardly spoke to his son or to his wife. He was depressed and went about alone with his thoughts as if in a dream. Anna was grieved to see her husband take things to heart so. But she was happy over Fred's action, she was fairly thankful to him for what he had done, for not letting anything mar his bride's happiness.

Mr. Gardner took pains to give the wedding as little of a religious tinge as possible. He had requested the minister not to put on his vestments and to solemnize the marriage in his street clothes. The latter acquiesced. But when the minister began to read the long ritual of the solemnization of matrimony as prescribed by the Episcopal church, Gottfried Conrad quailed and sought to hide his emotion by looking out of the window.

He was shamed, he was humiliated. His son, his *Lassalle,* was going through the prescribed church formula, answering the prescribed questions which the minister was droning out. Eh, what a jester fate was! He had thought he would mold the New World to his ideas, he would mold it through his son. Instead America was taking him in hand. It was molding, had already molded his son. He had no fault to find with Fred. He was a fine boy, a boy to be proud of. But there was something missing in him, something which he feared would prevent his boy from becoming the Lassalle which he had pictured him in his mind.

He glanced at the minister. He was so different from the stout-bodied, aggressive priests to which Gottfried Conrad was accustomed in the Old World. The clergyman was spare. His pale features plainly betrayed the worry of making a living, Gottfried thought. His hair was gray prema-

turely. Gottfried had no ill feeling against the man personally. By no stretch of the imagination could the subdued individual be construed into a cunning and designing Machiavelli plotting the enslavement of the human race to the rule of priestcraft.

"Nevertheless," Gottfried mused, "he stands for the same thing. The shell is different, but the essence is the same. Clergy is clergy everywhere. Its aims are the same."

The ceremony was over. Mr. Gardner asked the minister to stay for the wedding supper, but the clergyman had sensed the hostile atmosphere and, pleading that he was busy, he left hastily.

In spite of his efforts not to appear sulky at the supper table, Gottfried Conrad could not entirely suppress his feelings. Gloom was written on his face. He felt as if he were a stranger there. He sat there not participating in the joy of the occasion, but as a critic. He was examining every one, his son, his daughter-in-law. He was not angry with Fred. The boy could not be blamed. And he liked Elsie — liked her very much. Besides, he believed in perfect freedom in such cases. He had himself married the girl of his choice, regardless of everything. It was his choice in marriage that had taken him to America. No, he had nothing against Fred, or Elsie. But — The House of Conrad was crumpling. For a time, for a few brief months, since that Sunday when Fred made his celebrated speech in the union, the House of Conrad seemed to him to be in the ascendency. He could see it rising, faintly hovering in the gray, misty distance. It cheered him, it warmed his heart. It was beginning to gain in clearness, this coveted house of his. It seemed to be nearing. Now — the House of Conrad was fast receding in the distance, becoming indistinguishable. America was reducing everything to a dead level. His boy was be-

ing reduced, devitalized by his surroundings. Elsie would help reduce him — she would do it lovingly. And Gardner would help reduce him. He would do it by teaching the boy prudence, American prudence. The old man was sincere, no doubt. He was learned and a good specimen of an American. But he was poor company for his son, if his boy, his Lassalle, was to be the leader of the proletariat he had hoped he would be. . . .

The future looked gray, misty. Gottfried Conrad was no longer sure of his dreams. He was not sure of himself. Late that evening as Fred and Elsie were bidding him goodnight before starting for their own little flat, Gottfried pulled his son over to one side, took him in his arms, gazed deep into his eyes for some moments and kissed him, with the tears coursing down his cheeks.

BOOK II
FRED CONRAD

CHAPTER X

FRED SPEAKS HIS MIND

THE yawn spread from one of the reporters to the others and the boredom in the eyes of the five "labor editors" of Chicago's five morning newspapers gave way to a glint of amusement at their own defection. It was a tiresome business, this sitting through an entire July afternoon in a stuffy hall, listening to speeches and grievances that had been aired a dozen times before. Moreover, the import of these grievances seemed no different from what these newspapermen were accustomed to hear day in and day out at labor meetings and assemblies which they had been attending for years.

But sit through the meeting the reporters must, that day especially. There were several reasons for it. First, it was Saturday. News was scarce and there was a big paper on Sunday. They would have to let their copy run full. Second, the strike of the bakers was nearing the close of its third week. There were a couple of first-page strike stories immediately after the tie-up was declared. Then the strike news was relegated to the inside pages. It was about time now for another first-page story.

To save their ruffled dignity after that round-robin yawn, the newspapermen quickly straightened out in their chairs, relit their old cigars, or took out fresh ones, and sat alert.

In spite of the three weeks which the strike of the bakers had lasted; in spite, too, of the fact that there was "a piece in the paper" about it every day, the Chicago public had no clear notion of what the strikers wanted. The first day the

men walked out the newspapers said something about higher wages, shorter hours and better conditions. Thereafter, however, the newspaper accounts of the strike concerned themselves almost exclusively with "law and order." The stories in the papers told either of "violence" on the part of the strikers, or else gave long accounts of the police activities in connection with the strike, how splendidly order was maintained by Captain So-and-So, and the like. That the strikers were citizens and voters; that they paid taxes, supported schools, churches; that they were a part of the American people toward whom the papers ordinarily exhibited great respect, was lost sight of in most of the strike stories. In reading the newspaper accounts about the bakers one somehow got the impression that these men, most of whom were middle-aged, nearly all of whom were fathers, and many of whom were grandfathers, were a lot of irresponsible boys, street-corner loafers out for mischief, and were it not for the prudence, patience and vigilance of the police, heaven only knows what mischief these men would do to the public and the city.

Had the strike of the bakers taken place a few years later the sociologists and reformers of that day would have dug out its significance and dragged it into the newspapers. At that early date, however — the middle of the Nineties of the past century — the sociologist and reformer of a later day were still unknown and the newspapers and the public saw only the exterior manifestations of the strike, not the deep-rooted causes of the dissatisfaction among the workers.

Higher wages and a decrease in the working hours were not the main issues. What the men assailed most bitterly was an institution — the underground bakeshop. The baking industry in Chicago and in every large city in the country was at that time located underground, in cellars. Because

of the absence of sunshine and fresh air, because of the perpetual dampness, filth and mold, consumption and various other bronchial diseases were making heavy inroads among the workmen in the baking industry. The strike of the bakers was the first of a long series of struggles which brought about the abolition of many of the basement bakeries and the improvement of others.

The reporters, who had been listening to the various speakers for two hours, were beginning to lose heart. The setting for a big story certainly was there. Five thousand men crowded into a hall that had a normal capacity for only half that number. With all this, however, the prospects for a first-page story were slim because nothing had been done so far, no startling action had been taken by the union.

"Gab and more gab," one of the journalists, a middle-aged man, remarked cynically to his neighbor. At that very moment, however, a man who was a stranger to the reporters entered through a side door and, led by the president of the Bakers' Union, ascended the platform. The indifference of the newspapermen, the relaxed, lazy feeling vanished. The big story they had been aching for all that afternoon had arrived; they sensed it. They were all attention — eye, ear, memory, pencil. They were not losing a moment. They were studying this newcomer at long range, making a mental picture of his wiry frame, of his clear complexion, clean-cut features. They were appraising his probable standing in the labor movement.

The newcomer on the platform was indeed a curious mixture. He was seemingly a workingman. Yet a slight change in his clothes could have made him look anything but a workingman. He was about thirty or under, but the gaze in his blue eyes was sedate, settled. They had not heard his voice, but his manner, his gestures were not of the spell-

binder. There was nothing of the visionary about him. He was a simple, everyday sort of man, free even from the few poses and airs which some of the more important labor leaders were assuming.

The stranger was introduced by the chairman of the meeting as "Organizer Fred Conrad from New York." Conrad, he explained, had been in Chicago for nearly a week. The organizer from New York and a committee from the union had been conducting an investigation, the results of which Brother Conrad would now outline.

Fred Conrad came forward and laid some papers on the table.

"I am not going to make a speech to you this afternoon," he began without preliminaries. "The day is too hot — too hot even for bakers. I will merely report to you what the committee to which I had the pleasure to belong, and which has chosen me as spokesman, has accomplished in the past week. I shall tell you what we intend to do before we give up this struggle. . . ."

"We don't give up, we don't, by God, Brother Conrad —" some one in the hall shouted. Conrad lifted his hand warningly.

"Let me go on, Brother," he continued coolly, "and make the situation clear to you. You can criticize me afterward. We may have to give up this fight. We depend upon wages for a living. We may not be able to hold out against our employers much longer. There is a limit beyond which many of us may not be able to go. There are little children to be considered — we cannot starve them. I say, therefore, that we may have to give up this struggle. But before we give up we shall do one more thing: we shall state our case to the public fully and clearly and we shall see whether the public approves our fight or sides with our employers.

"We have drawn up here a statement of grievances. It is a statement of evidence against the bakeshops of this city. It makes clear our position. Our fight is not merely for a few more pennies in wages, though these are needed badly enough. It is a fight for life, for health. We are arrayed against disease and death. The cellar bakeshops of Chicago are death houses for the men who work in them. They are filthy, reeking places. The walls are slimy from perpetual moisture and from lack of sunshine. They are infested with vermin, roaches and rats. They are hotbeds of disease.

"It is our view that this strike should not be your fight alone. It should be the public's fight. For the public suffers from these horrible conditions as well as you, if not as much as you. The basement bakeries give you sickness and condemn you to an untimely death. But we live in a world of mutual progress and mutual deterioration. Death stalks in the bakeries of Chicago not alone for you but for the public as well, for it is with your sick frames, with your consumptive sweat, that you bake the public's bread.

"We have decided, therefore, to let the public be the arbiter of this strike. We are going to let the public know of the contaminating, unspeakable conditions under which its bread is baked and we shall let the public decide whether the baking industry should be lifted out of its underground pestholes or whether it should stay there.

"We have tabulated data and statistics which speak for themselves. We have figures showing the frightfully high percentage of consumptives among you men. We have figures showing how abnormally high among you is the percentage of other diseases that are directly due to your being locked up under ground year after year, without sunlight, without air, without ventilation. We have a list of neglects and offenses by employers in the way of sanitation, neglects which make the

eating of bread revolting to those who know how it is produced.

"These documents, the results of our investigations, we shall, with your approval, submit to the health authorities of this city and state. Let the Health Department make an investigation and check up on us. Let the newspapers of this city inquire and see whether we are speaking the truth.

"If the public is willing that we should return to the old conditions of work, if it is willing to eat the bread baked under such conditions, we will submit to the verdict of the public and give up this fight without further starving our wives and children."

Fred had spoken without flourishes, though he had spoken with clearness and effectiveness. The crowd waited for a final oratorical round up — the ending of the speech was so abrupt. But when it saw Conrad returning to his seat, it burst out in belated and thunderous applause.

The reporters leaped to the platform before Fred had gained his chair. From that moment the strike had become the affair of the city and of the newspapers — and it was won. It had been a much duller day for news than even the reporters had anticipated, and in every case word had come from the managing editor that the story about the conditions prevailing in Chicago's bakeshops be played to the limit. And it was played. It was too late to find the commissioner of health at the city hall, so he was rung up at his home. He was not in: he had gone out to his country club for the week-end. He was rung up there and the gist of the charges made by the "New York Organizer" against the cellar bakeshops was read to him over the telephone. Would he take action?

The commissioner knew by the voice over the wire that an enthusiastically affirmative reply was expected, and he an-

swered accordingly. Action? of course he would take action. Why, he had been planning for some weeks now to look into these very conditions. The pressure of other business alone had kept him from ordering just such an investigation. He would issue directions at once for a thorough clean up. It was very commendable of the union to call his attention to these abuses.

"Fine, fine," said the editor when the reporter gave him the gist of the health commissioner's statement. "Now get the mayor."

The mayor was apprised of the union charges and of the health commissioner's approval of the same. What did His Honor have to say? "What did he have to say?" Why, His Honor, the Mayor, was for a most thorough investigation, most thorough. He would give the health commissioner every help possible. He would issue orders to all related city departments to cooperate with the health commissioner. Such conditions were a disgrace to the city and must be abolished at once. The city's bread must be baked under clean, healthful conditions.

When Chicago citizens opened their Sunday papers the next morning the headline "Death Stalks in City's Bakeshops" smote them in the face. It stood out in the boldest, blackest type the papers could command. The figures of consumption among bakers and the statements of the commissioner of health and of the mayor were boxed at the top of the page. After perusing these headlines the toast on the breakfast table assumed an offensive appearance. The baker bosses scurried about from one place to another in panic. If they could only silence the union leaders, silence the papers! They would give in to all the demands of the strikers. . . . In the meantime they had ordered a hasty but thorough clean-up of the shops. Some were running for plumbers. The city inspect-

ors must not be allowed to see the horrible sanitation of their places; it would be ruin.

The New York newspapers were greatly interested in Fred Conrad's arraignment of the underground bakeshops of Chicago. The story came over the wires too late to make extensive inquiries into the conditions under which bread was baked in New York. Local labor leaders and the city authorities were interviewed, however, and the brief statements obtained from them were not at all reassuring. It was likely, the newspapers hinted, that New York could show in its bread-making shops conditions not dissimilar to those that startled Chicago.

Heinrich Kolb, the editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, was gray and ailing. Age was fastening its grip upon him rapidly and prematurely. He was barely fifty-five years old, yet he frequently failed to appear at his office for two or three days at a time, sending over his editorials by boy. Late that Saturday afternoon, however, he dropped into the office and stayed for the evening. As he was fingering a batch of proofs he ran across the name "Conrad" in a headline. His interest was aroused and he read the story.

He was moved to tears. For the moment he had forgotten that it was news and that he was an editor. It seemed a personal matter to him. Freddy, the son of his lifelong friend Gottfried, the little boy whose "christening" he had attended at the dawn of their career in the New World, Freddy, to whom he always acted and felt like an uncle, that Freddy had now made his voice heard from one end of the country to the other. His instinct as an editor told him that the story of the startling conditions prevailing in Chicago bakeshops would be on the first page of every newspaper in the country the next morning. A glow of warmth transfused itself

through Kolb's veins. He walked over to where his news editor, a fat, phlegmatic Mecklenburger, sat and said:

"Put every word of the Conrad story on the first page; it is the biggest labor story of recent years."

And then he returned to the further end of the room where his own desk stood, screened from view by several bookcases. He settled in his chair and began to read the story once more. And as he read a peculiar feeling came over him. The speech was typical of Fred Conrad. He had been watching the boy's rise in the bakers' union and later in the labor movement for nearly ten years. The speech had the breath of humanity, but all reference to socialism had been carefully eliminated from it. There was not a stock socialist phrase in it. Fred had not questioned the right of private property, of rent, profit, interest.

Kolb had never married and he clung to the friendships of his youth with touching tenderness. His thoughts now reverted to Gottfried Conrad. His lifelong friend and comrade in arms had drawn into himself of late. Gottfried was sorely grieved by his son's obstinate refusal to join him in socialist councils. Kolb now realized the keenness of the father's grief. Fred was cut out for leadership, but the socialist movement would probably never count him as an active propagandist of its theories. He mused over the irony of life. The dreams and ideals for which the fathers went into exile, faced prison and even death, these ideals were indifferently put aside by their Americanized children. The socialist movement was not gaining adherents among the American-born workers. And yet many of these labor leaders like Fred Conrad were faithful and big-hearted men. How account for their stubborn indifference to the international movement of the proletariat?

He perused Fred's speech for a third time. There was humanity in every word he had spoken. It was a working-class document of first magnitude, regardless of the fact that it did not seemingly subscribe to the socialist ritual. It was a speech the socialists should recognize. It was an achievement that ought to warm the heart of old Gottfried.

Kolb wiped his spectacles and took pen and paper. There was still time to get an editorial in the paper. He put down the caption "Fred Speaks His Mind." And the half column editorial that followed had a reminiscent touch and a personal warmth that was not at all in accord with Kolb's otherwise rigid and uncompromising editorial judgment.

He eulogized Fred Conrad, called him a "son of the masses" and a "tribune of the proletariat." His Chicago speech, he said, would stand out as a masterpiece of working-class thought and sentiment. Then he went over to Fred's father, "our old and faithful Comrade, Gottfried Conrad," and congratulated him upon his son. He expressed the fervent wish that Gottfried's boy (he used the familiar German "Junge") might rise to yet greater heights as a leader of the working class, that he might rival the fame of the great champion of the proletariat after whom he was named — Ferdinand Lassalle.

The paper trembled in Gottfried's hands as he read the account of the storm raised by his son's activity in behalf of the striking bakers in Chicago. He doubted his vision. What he saw in the paper was too much like the dream he had been dreaming all his life. In his flights of fancy he had often in his younger days seen his son, his Lassalle, towering as the great tribune of the American proletariat. But so many of his dreams had been wrecked by the New World; he must not let an illusion get the best of him now. His misty gaze

clung to the paper desperately, tragically. It seemed to him that if he once lifted his eyes the contents of the page would change, the deep, dark letters spelling his son's name would vanish, his dream would burst like a bubble. And the illusion was so sweet, he wanted to hang on to it a little longer.

But it was no dream. His son's name was staring at him not only from the headlines of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* but from numerous places in the three and a half columns which the story occupied. One paragraph, in particular, held his gaze. It read:

"Fred Conrad's speech has shaken the capitalist class of America out of its complacency. His words have been telegraphed from one end of the country to the other and the authorities, not alone of Chicago, but of every large city, have announced that they would investigate the bakeshops to make sure that such conditions as exist in some parts of Chicago are not duplicated in their cities. In laying the strike of the bakers squarely at the door of the public and of the authorities, Fred Conrad has with one stroke won for the union the fight for healthful and humane working conditions which the organization has been waging unsuccessfully for years."

The press of the entire country was talking about his son. The capitalist press was compelled by his son's resourcefulness and simple eloquence to take note of the grievances of the workers and of the heartlessness and brutality and greed of the baker bosses. The dear boy. . . .

Gottfried's eyes suddenly blazed. This was his opportunity — there was no mistake about it. He would prevail upon his son this time. Fred could not consistently stay out of the socialist movement any longer. His Chicago triumph was only a beginning. He would be a leader of great masses of

workmen henceforth. He must have a "Richtung," a goal to which to lead the working class.

He wiped the haze from his eyes and looked once more at the paper. Then he looked toward the kitchen. Anna was busy with their Sunday dinner. He was about to call her, but refrained. He did not see things quite clearly yet. He was thinking once more.

Gottfried's relations to his wife had undergone marked changes since Fred had married and left them eight years back. He had grown more tender toward Anna and was not averse to showing it. They were companions now. They were nearer to each other than they had ever been. They had so many things to talk about. Gottfried was shoving much of his work in the socialist movement on to the shoulders of younger men and was spending his evenings at home more often now. He and Anna would stroll down to the river or to the park on a warm summer night. In the winter they would often sit side by side in front of the kitchen stove and analyze their ailments or talk and think of the past.

He recalled the eight years since Fred had married. On several occasions father and son had been estranged from each other for months at a time because of disagreements over socialism. Anna worried herself sick at such times. She longed to see Fred and his children. Fred, too, felt keenly his father's displeasure. But these estrangements did not bring him nearer to his father's political faith.

For it was not ignorance of the socialist theories, nor motives of fear or gain that kept Fred from joining his father in the councils of socialism. It was something else, something that was bred in the blood, something that had to do with America, a "something" that was not open to argument.

As a child Fred had seen socialism preached in the German language. It was argued in German beer halls and at Ger-

man picnics. It was defended in a German newspaper. Every meeting of socialists was a meeting of Germans, of foreigners. His father's political associates were foreigners. When a socialist meeting was broken up it was American policemen who broke it up and they jeered and taunted the "Dutchmen" and the "foreigners." The police had the better of the situation always and the socialists invariably fled from the hall. There was no dignity in their flight. Since childhood the conviction had grown upon Fred that, like his father, socialism was born abroad and came to America too late to acclimatize itself to American surroundings. Like his father's accent, socialism was not a thing desirable of cultivation by the American-born, Fred felt vaguely but early in his life, and such early feelings can never be quite eradicated.

Later he had learned from books and pamphlets that socialism was international, that socialist teachings were as applicable to America as they were to England or Germany. And he believed it, too. Nevertheless he could not work up enthusiasm for the socialist movement. He could understand it, respect it, just as he understood and respected his father, but he could not make it a part of himself or become a part of it any more than he could become his father or his father him. Socialism had gone hand in hand with his father's foreign accent and un-American ways all through his childhood and had caused him much pain and humiliation. It still cast a gloom over him to recall those days when he was lonely and depressed and jeered at because his father was "different" and never went to church or Sunday-school. His impressions of socialism and the chilling memories of those days had become as one to him.

Gottfried had gradually come to see these almost physical barriers which stood between him and his son. He was beginning to realize that it was not intellect but feeling that

was swaying Fred in his attitude toward the socialist cause. It was tragic to see his dreams shattered, but it was an even greater tragedy for his son. Fred had in him the making of a great leader. But a great leader must have a great cause to promote, and what was the improvement of the lot of five thousand bakers in comparison with the reshaping of society and the recasting of civilization which socialism contemplated!

He had been turning the pages and his eyes fell upon the heading, "Fred Speaks His Mind." He read the half-column editorial without moving an eyelash. He quaffed it without a let-up, as a thirsty man drains a glass of water, without stopping to breathe. Kolb's words of praise for his son, and of recognition for him, the boy's father, left Gottfried prostrate for the moment. That was too much happiness at one time.

"Anna!" he called with subdued excitement. "Anna!" He was holding the paper in his hand with great care now, as if it were something very precious and fragile.

"See," he pointed the place out to his wife, "they are writing about our Freddy — nice!"

He had frequent recourse to his handkerchief as he read the editorial to her, clearing his throat and wiping his gray mustache constantly. He read Fred's speech to her, as much of it as the paper gave. He read it dramatically, as if he were making the speech, delivering it before an audience. Anna was in tears.

"I say," Gottfried roused himself from his reveries, "maybe you could hurry with the dinner, Anna, and we go to see the children. They are alone now since Fred is in Chicago."

Anna's eyes glowed with happiness. To visit her grandchildren was the one great delight of her ebbing life. But of late these visits had become infrequent. Elsie had tired of the

noise and surroundings of the East Side and Fred had found a small house in the Bronx which had a porch and a garden. Since they had moved there it was not easy for Anna, whose strength was very limited, to visit her grandchildren often. She could not go by herself and it was not always possible to prevail on Gottfried to go with her. There were times when his son would appear to Gottfried as an apostate, a renegade to his, Gottfried's, faith in the destiny of man. At such times Anna would swallow every reference to her son or to their grandchildren with a stifled sob.

She was all excitement now. What luck! Everything she had to-day was of the best and was cooking splendidly. Dinner would be ready in a twinkling.

While Anna was speeding things up in the kitchen, Gottfried had gone down into the street and was making the rounds of the stands and stores. He never went to his grandchildren empty-handed. That day he was especially profuse in his purchases.

Their grandchildren descried Gottfried and Anna a block away and ran to meet them. Elsie, who was in the dining-room clearing away her dinner dishes from the table, heard the children's jubilant cries and stepped into the front room just in time to see Gottfried come up the stairs of the porch heavily laden with baskets and bundles. Anna followed him, flushed and smiling.

It was a joyous day. The house was at once enlivened. Ruth, Fred's oldest child, now in her seventh year, clambered up on one of Gottfried's knees, and Robert, who was two years younger than his sister, on the other. Just as Gottfriend's presents had been more abundant on this occasion, so also he gave his indulgence wide latitude. The children, especially Robert, jumped and crawled all over him. Once or twice Elsie admonished her little son not to be so rough with

his grandfather, but Gottfried laughed away her fears every time. Rough? The boy was not rough enough! He invited all the pranks his grandson could play and when they were exhausted Gottfried began to teach him new tricks.

Anna watched her husband with delight. Gottfried seemed like a boy once more. Half of his fifty-odd years seemed to have rolled off his shoulders. He was spry and nimble again, catching the ball which Robert was tossing to him with ease, or picking up the little fellow on a run and swinging him high over his head, while Ruth choked with laughter.

Anna, who was always grieved, but never took sides, in the standing quarrel between father and son over matters of politics, now felt as if the last layer of resentment was thawing in Gottfried's heart and that henceforth Fred and his father would once again live in harmony and understanding with each other. Yes, a secret hope even came to her that she might prevail upon her husband to move to the Bronx so that they might be near the children and Fred and Elsie and see them every day. The subject of moving from *Kleindeutschland* was not an easy one to broach. Gottfried had lived there ever since he came to America. The halls where he spoke were there, the union headquarters were in the neighborhood, and the *Arbeiter Zeitung* was only a short distance from their home. He would miss his friends, he would miss the atmosphere, to be sure, but it was not impossible, not now, not after the way he was playing with his grandchildren!

Anna half listened to her daughter-in-law. The smile which played upon her thin, wizened face and bloodless lips — the face and lips of an old woman who had been an invalid all her life — was there not in response to what her daughter-in-law was saying, but because of the picture she was conjuring up in her mind. She could swear that Gottfried would move to the Bronx. Why, she had never seen the man look

so happy in years. The grandchildren were making him happy. The pent paternal longings were loosened. Gottfried was a boy again, the boy she knew under the lime trees on the Rhine.

Gottfried, meantime, had left the house, followed by his two grandchildren. They needed more room to play in than the house afforded and there was plenty of it outside. Only a few rods distant the fields began. Little Bob insisted that his grandpa race with him and Gottfried agreed to it readily, much to the surprise of Ruth who, being older, thought that her brother had overstepped the limits in asking his grandfather to run with him as he was wont to ask his father to do.

Gottfried raced. After a few jumps his thin, wiry frame became supple again and a reserve of youth which the grayness of his life had never permitted to come to the surface, now bubbled up and ran over in all his actions. When a boy, Gottfried could whistle well. He now tried it and it came back to him. The children were delighted. He whistled an old German song. Bob and Ruth watched for some time, then they began to clamor, Ruth for the words of the song, she wanted to learn it, and Bob wanted his grandfather to teach him how to whistle.

Elsie had always been fond of her mother-in-law. She loved and pitied her. Without words the two women understood each other. Elsie surmised her mother-in-law's lot through the thirty years of married life and often sighed when she contemplated it. But never had a word or sign passed her lips in her mother-in-law's presence. Against Gottfried, Elsie cherished a slight resentment for her father-in-law's everlastingly belligerent attitude toward Fred. It was not easy for Fred to be conscious that he was a disappointment to his father. It made him sulky and at times bitter to see

his father turn their differences in ideas into protracted and painful quarrels.

As they sat at supper that evening, however, all of these ancient grievances and sorenesses were forgotten on both sides. The absence of Fred from his accustomed place at the table turned all thoughts to him all the more tenderly. Gottfried now spoke with Elsie about her husband, about his Chicago speech. He was reserved in his praise, letting his words fall judiciously. He was analyzing his son's speech and action like a trained critic. He was trying to be impartial. It was this exaggerated restraint, however, this fear of being carried away by his own emotions, by his own happiness, that showed his daughter-in-law how deeply proud Gottfried was of his son, how he valued and appreciated the great honor which Fred had done him by letting his plea for the striking bakers in Chicago ring out through the whole country. And Elsie loved her father-in-law, loved him for that very pride and consistency which she had assailed on other occasions. Gottfried had such ambitions for his son, for Fred. In the face of this passionate attachment of the father for his son one could overlook everything, one could forgive everything. It was after ten o'clock when Gottfried and Anna reached their home. The flat looked out upon the street, and through the raised window children's voices came. Gottfried thought of his grandchildren and the house seemed to him more desolate than ever.

Elsie had given them a photograph of Ruth and Robert which had come from the studio only a few days previous. Gottfried and his wife sat gazing at the picture by turns. Anna wanted to approach the subject of moving to the Bronx, but checked herself. She must not be too hasty, Gottfried was apt to resent it. Her husband was changing, he was softening toward Freddy, toward their grandchildren.

He would come around. She must be cautious. For such happiness she could well afford to be patient a little longer. Her heart was trembling for joy. . . .

It was past midnight when Gottfried heard a hushed sob escape Anna's breast.

"You are not sleeping?" he asked.

"No," she said. "I don't seem to feel a bit tired now, and I was so tired on the train."

"You know," Gottfried said a little later, "Ruth is going to look just like you — exactly the way you looked once, *at home.* She is going to have your hair and her nose is like yours."

Anna did not answer. The tired feeling which she had been vainly wooing for the better part of two hours had come upon her very suddenly and left her completely enervated and exhausted. Gottfried saw her doze off and spoke no more. He was staring at the wall, and suddenly he beheld a boyhood companion he had not thought of in more than forty years. He was delighted to see him. The fellow was a traveling apprentice and Gottfried joined him. It was pleasanter to travel in company. His friend was jolly and they sang old songs about love and longing. And then it was moonlight and he had a narrow escape. He was going to meet his Ännchen, and dodged behind a bush just in time to escape the eagle eye of her father, Old Launitz. And how they laughed, he and his Ännchen, over his lucky escape. She twined her golden braids about his neck and brought his face so close to her that his head began to swim and sank down on her breast. And then they stole along the hedges toward the house, talking in whispers, when suddenly his Ännchen tripped and clasped his arm violently. . . .

He woke and felt that his wife's fingers had that very instant become limp about his arm. He turned about and

gazed at her. It was morning. A ray of sunlight was falling across the room. Anna was asleep, but there was a strange expression on her face. He wondered where he had seen that expression before. He was positive he had seen it somewhere, sometime. He looked again. . . . An exclamation stiffened in his tongue and jaws. . . . His wife was dead. . . .

CHAPTER XI

WHEN THE LIGHT IS LOW

THE murky light of the sleeping car made reading tiresome. Fred Conrad laid aside the convention report he had been studying, and, leaning back in his seat, watched the colored porter make up a bed at the farther end of the car; a woman wished to put her baby to sleep for the night. After some time Fred thought he felt a drowsiness come over him and he hastened to yield himself up to it. He was very tired and would welcome even a brief sleep. He had been on the train all day and had been up early that morning. Indeed, he had had very little rest in the three weeks since his mother's death. With her demise a host of new domestic problems had arisen.

But the drowsiness was deceptive. Sleep did not come to him. He was too tired to drop off readily into rest and forgetfulness. So he moved over to the window and watched the shifting panorama. It was a clear, moonlight evening in August. The breath of the country was sweet. But the soft wind seemed to Fred Conrad to be fraught with sadness. The trees, and here and there a lonely stack of hay, stood silent, dark gray, as if contemplating the mystery of existence, the shortness of life and the ugliness of death, which is the inevitable epilogue of all handiworks of nature. Fred's thoughts turned inward.

With all his domestic griefs and trials of the past few weeks, he had had to tend to business. There was no letting

up. Life thought only in terms of living and had no time for tears and regrets. He made his report on the Chicago victory to the Executive Council of the Bakers' Amalgamated Association. The officers of the Council called a mass meeting of all the baker unions for Sunday afternoon. The rank and file was to hear from Fred Conrad's own lips the story of what their Chicago comrades had achieved. A rousing speech was expected of Conrad. With his mother's fresh grave constantly before his eyes, however, Fred could only speak evenly and moderately. He was not underestimating the triumph of the Chicago strikers. Far from it! But he passed over lightly his own part in it. He said not a word about his own, and by this time, celebrated speech.

To the few men in the audience who knew that Fred Conrad had buried his mother in the early part of that week, his subdued demeanor on the platform was justified and they watched him with sympathetic eyes. The very softness of his speech, however, the complete absence of even the most legitimate bit of pride or swagger, in the end piled up great strength and the cumulative effect of it did not miss the audience. The men had come there to be thrilled by an exultant, fiery speech of defiance. They found themselves inspired by the earnest words of the speaker and by the unassuming, democratic way in which they were spoken. Fred Conrad was the lion of the occasion. Every one in the audience was eager to hear the next step, for a next step there must be to such an occasion, to such a victory. The union must make good use of Fred Conrad. He should be given the means to do things.

Ed Linden, the president of the Executive Council, phrased these thoughts of the mass of workingmen in proper form. Linden spoke straight from the shoulder. The Chicago victory must be capitalized by the Bakers' Amalgamated Association. The bakers in other cities must gain similar con-

cessions. They must at once begin a campaign of organization. There should be a branch of the Bakers' Amalgamated Association in every city in the United States.

Here Ed Linden expanded his chest, a trick of his which invariably denoted triumph and which the audience well knew. It was he, Ed Linden, who had first advanced the suggestion to the Executive Council to send Fred Conrad to co-operate with the Chicago strikers. Well, he now had another idea. The Executive Council, without delay, should appoint Fred Conrad national organizer and send him out on a campaign of organization throughout the country.

It was as National Organizer of the Bakers' Amalgamated Association that Fred was now on his way to St. Louis to take charge of a strike there. When he had settled matters in St. Louis, he was to start in on his organization tour which was to extend as far as the Pacific Coast. The union figured that it would take him at least three months to cover the ground. Fred was now thinking about this. It was the first time he was to be away from his family for so long. He mused about the prospective trip cheerlessly.

The train was now cutting through a small Pennsylvania town. As it passed the main street it slowed up a trifle and bits of life came into view. It had been a sultry day and every one seemed tired, weary. On a deserted street, a ragged urchin stopped in his slow, even walk to examine the passing train. The boy was looking at the Pullmans reflectively, as if trying to fathom what life in these sleeping-cars might be like. The car passed him and a little farther on Fred saw a young woman lift a four-year-old boy from the steps of the porch where he had fallen asleep. As they disappeared from view, Fred caught a final glimpse of the mother holding the face of her sleeping child close to her own and kissing it tenderly. It was children's bedtime. He thought of

Ruth and Robert. Elsie must be putting them to bed now.

A yearning for his wife came over him. Elsie meant so much to him. He would never dare tell how much his wife meant to him. Most people would not understand it. They might even laugh at him, think him weak. A friend of his, a union official, had told him recently of certain troubles he was going through. He wanted Fred's advice and sympathy. He had to have a living soul to talk to, the man had said.

"What does your wife do in the matter?" Fred had asked.

The friend had looked up at him amazed, almost offended.

"Wife?" he had said. "Why, she knows nothing of it. I never talk to her about such things."

Fred had wondered how such a state of affairs could exist in a family. As for himself, he talked over everything with Elsie; his work, his family affairs, his conception of the labor movement and what its aims should be. It was a relief to have her take a situation apart, thread by thread, and then put it together again. In that process, somehow, his mind would clear and his heart would lighten. Things never seemed quite so grave or difficult after he had talked them over with Elsie.

His thoughts of Elsie were becoming painful; the twelve weeks ahead loomed like an interminable vista. It would be hard, but he was not complaining. One had to take life as it comes — he had long ago learned that lesson. But it was a great pity none the less. He and Elsie had never really had enough of each other's company. In the first two years of their married life he still worked in the bakeshop at night. Then he was made business agent of the union and he had stayed in various official capacities ever since. That ended his night work in the shop, but his evenings were taken from him, nevertheless, by union business. There were endless committee meetings, agitation meetings, conferences with em-

ployers. They were held in the evening mostly. Later, when his name as a level-spoken man had gone beyond the limits of the bakers' association, the Central Labor Board, an organization of the combined labor unions of New York, to which he was a delegate, would frequently appoint him on committees to help adjust strikes and grievances in trades outside his own. They needed clear-minded men in the labor movement. The employers were sharp; they never made a move without consulting an attorney. The union leaders had to think fast and be on guard.

With all these demands on his time, Elsie was forced to stay at home in the evening pretty much as his mother had done during his childhood. Only, of course, there was this vast difference: his mother had been alone in a strange land; Elsie was at least in her own country. She was at home here. And then again she was not nearly so lonesome as his mother had been. It was not yet three years since Old Man Gardner had died. Up to the last Elsie's uncle had come to their house every evening. He would put Ruthie and, later, Robert to bed and would tell them stories. It was a pity the old man could not have lived longer. They all needed him so much. The children missed in him a grandfather, and Fred, a friend and adviser of deep insight and keen judgment. He, Fred, was indebted to the old family uncle for many of his decisive moves and policies. The old man had had a part in framing his attitude on most questions and matters of importance. It was remarkable how Old Man Gardner could clinch a situation. Thought with him was never merely a gymnastic exercise. It was utilitarian, definite, leading somewhere, to something. He was so characteristically American. He would never lose himself in a haze of ideas as his father, Gottfried Conrad, did, for instance. It was a saying of Gardner's that while dreams must precede action, dreams were

injurious when not crowned by achievements. Fred Conrad never forgot these words.

Too bad he died so early, Fred mused. He was thinking about life; how treacherous it was, how it always gave way when one thought one was on a sure footing. There was his mother, a young woman compared to Mr. Gardner. At the very moment when she might have enjoyed life, might have compensated herself for her years of suffering and silent torture, her existence was snuffed out like a candle that is blown out by the wind.

The thought of his mother was crowded out by the thought of Mrs. Gardner. Fred had been so busy since his mother's death that he had forgotten to ask Elsie when she had last heard from her aunt. Upon the death of Mr. Gardner, his widow went to live with a sister in Boston, though Elsie and Fred had implored her to stay with them. Elsie was corresponding with her from time to time.

While Fred Conrad's thoughts, in the dim lamplight of the sleeping-car, were turning in a circle about his family — the living and the dead — his father was finishing his evening meal in a humble restaurant on one of Little Germany's side streets. Most of the men about the tables were in the twenties, unmarried young immigrants. They were steady patrons of the place and every one knew every one else. Gottfried Conrad was the only elderly person in the room and his distracted, but impressive, appearance aroused considerable interest.

Gottfried had purposely passed by several of the better known German restaurants in the district in favor of this humble place because he did not wish to take chances of meeting people he might know. He was in no mood to meet and talk to any one. It was hard for him to get accustomed

to taking his meals in a restaurant. It seemed undignified to be sitting a stranger at a strange table after so many years of married life. Even more depressing was the thought of becoming a "boarder" somewhere. It was no easy matter to cease being the head of the house after more than thirty years.

Several of the men who entered the restaurant at the same time with Conrad had already left. Gottfried was conscious that he was lingering too long. But he did not hurry to leave the table. It had been a warm day and he was completely enervated. It was pleasant to yield oneself up to the restfulness of a cigar and to one's thoughts a little longer.

Once in the street he started for home. But when he reached the tenement where he lived, he changed his mind. What was the use of hurrying to his flat? He did not expect any one that evening. Fred had left the city in the morning. Elsie could not possibly come at this time of night. He stepped into Vogelsang's hall.

Gottfried sat at one of the tables and ordered a glass of beer, but he did not touch it. He was ruminating and turning over in his mind the problem of his own future. Since the day of the funeral, his children, Fred and Elsie, had been clamoring for him to make his home with them. But he had been delaying. He invented various excuses for this delay. Matters of delicacy alone prevented his son and daughter-in-law from exposing his excuses as sham and hollow. They did not wish to press him too hard. Perhaps he needed time and solitude to reconcile him to the fact of his wife's death, and accustom his mind to the rearrangement of his existence. But why was he delaying? What was he planning to do? Yes, what?

He stared ahead of him through the hazy atmosphere. The room was filled with people and everybody was talking, but he did not seem to be aware of it. He was facing a hard

problem and his mind was concentrated upon its solution.

He was aroused by the eager voice and hearty greeting of Otto Bachman.

Gottfried was glad to see Bachman at all times. It was a relief to see him now. He and Bachman had been friends for more than thirty years. With Gottfried Conrad and Heinrich Kolb, Otto Bachman was one of the little group of pioneers of the socialist movement in America. He was one of the founders of the socialist organ, the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Less intellectual than either Kolb or Gottfried, Bachman possessed that quality which the Germans call "Treue," faithfulness to a cause and to a friend, faithfulness unto death.

"So you are not staying with your son," Bachman repeated in a daze, when Gottfried came to that part of his story. He was moved to tears by the recital of his friend's trials, by Gottfried's complicated, broken life.

"No," said Gottfried. "I have been beating about the bush, trying to invent all sorts of excuses for refusing to live with my son. It has been hard on Fred — he is heartbroken over it. He expects me to move to him soon; I half promised him that I would.

"But I am afraid I won't," Gottfried added after a moment.

Bachman sat gazing at him intently. He had always admired Gottfried's directness of speech and thought. Conrad always faced the truth unflinchingly, even when it hurt. He was facing it now.

"You see," Gottfried was saying, and his eyes filled, "it is like this: Fred and I both need room — for ideas, I mean. I am not yet ready to give up the struggle physically or intellectually. I am not yet fifty-five. I am still strong. I think as clearly as ever and I am as firm in my convictions as ever. I can and will be of use to the movement as much

as ever — perhaps more. . . . For I no longer have obligations. I have no one to look after. . . ."

Bachman broke a momentary silence.

"But," he said, "why can't you stay with your son and go on with your work in the movement just as you are planning? Fred surely would not interfere with you. I know the boy. It is not in him to impose his will upon another by force."

Gottfried laughed, a sad, weary chuckle.

"No," he said, "it is not in him, but it is in *me*. I am not afraid of Fred's trying to force his convictions upon me, but I am afraid that I may be trying to impose my ideas upon him. It is myself I fear, my — my —"

Gottfried stopped short, trying to find the right word. Then he continued:

"I have lived all my life in a world of ideas. I struggled for ideas. On the battlefield of ideas I cannot stay neutral, not even with my own son. There has been a standing intellectual feud between my son and myself. . . . As long as my wife lived there was always some one to patch up our differences. There is no one now. So we must not quarrel, my son and I. . . . But what German will not bite and scrap for his convictions, even with his own son, even if his heart bleed to death in the process? I am afraid to move to Fred's — afraid of myself."

There was a note of extreme bitterness in Gottfried's last words. Bachman was seized with great pity for his comrade. How fine the fates were grinding, he mused. The powerful Gottfried broken in two in what should be his best years. Had Bachman been a believer, he would have thanked God, for his heart was overflowing in him. Life had been kind to him. His wife, his Marie, had never had a sick day.

"There is no use taking things so hard," Bachman said

after some deliberation. "You don't have to go to your son at once. And after a time things may straighten out of their own accord. But you cannot go on living by yourself."

Gottfried shifted uneasily. Since his wife's death and his refusal to move to his son's, Elsie had come down every other day, and sometimes oftener, to look after his little flat. Now that Fred was out of town, it would be a strain on her. It was too much to let her do. Moreover, she was expecting him to move to her every day.

"Gottfried," Otto Bachman broke his friend's revery, and as he continued speaking there was in his voice that rare quality of friendship between man and man that has its roots in a primitive, epic age, "Gottfried, I — we have only one boy at home now. All our other children are gone — married. Until you can see your way clear toward staying with your son, come to us. We shall be delighted, Marie and I. Marie has often spoken about your plight since your wife's death. Come with me; it will make things like old times again."

Gottfried looked up at Bachman in a daze. His conversation had left him exhausted, helpless for the moment. In his friend's words he sensed rest, shelter, protection. And he was too weary not to yield.

Otto Bachman hustled him out of the hall and in a few minutes they were at his home and Mrs. Bachman piled refreshments on the table, sufficient to make a good-sized meal for a good-sized family.

Mrs. Bachman was a woman in the fifties. She had raised six children. Life was hard during the first fifteen years of her married life. But as she had never had a day's illness in her house she managed things. Then when the children were old enough to go to work the Bachman family began to enjoy a degree of prosperity that told particularly on Mrs. Bachman. Her complexion was clear and florid, and she

always looked fresh and rested, as if she had just had a good nap. Even her gray hair seemed but to intensify this impression of rest and repose which she radiated.

Bachman urged Conrad to move the next morning. But Gottfried postponed it until the end of the week. It was hard to break up his home; he would proceed about it slowly. He would be at strange tables long enough — too long. He spent the next few days in gloomy meditations. Saturday afternoon he hunted up an expressman and asked him to come bright and early the next morning. He had disposed of most of his furniture to a second-hand man. He did not want to let his friends know that he was breaking up his home, though he would gladly have given some of the things away to people in the neighborhood. He spent the last night in his bare flat, sleeplessly. At six o'clock the expressman came. By seven he had moved. All the things he cared to take with him went into the family trunk. In addition, he took with him a small bookcase which he had cherished for years and a little table upon which stood the family album. With these he would not part.

He avoided looking at the Bachmans. As soon as he had arranged everything to his satisfaction in his room, he pleaded an engagement and left the house. He started northward almost at a run. He was going to the Bronx, to his grandchildren. But he was in no hurry to take the elevated. He had to think out a defense for himself, for his action, to Elsie. It would be a staggering blow to his daughter-in-law, to Fred, his moving to strangers. He must smooth it over, explain it. For a moment he thought of returning and restoring everything to its former place. His mind would not stay still. He was not sure of himself. But the impossibility of the thing was too patent. He must find an excuse, a proper excuse, to make to Elsie. And his grandchildren —

what if they should ask him when he was coming to stay with them? Their mother might have told them that he was coming!

It was hot, but he walked faster and faster, beads of perspiration coming to his forehead. Suddenly he came upon large numbers of people. He wondered what had happened. He stopped and looked about. Then he recalled — it was Sunday. People were going to church. They were going in families, just as in the Old World, just as they did years ago, thirty years ago. The church was surely holding its own! He noticed several men his own age among the churchgoers. One of these was leading a child of six, apparently a grandson, by the hand. How rested all these people looked, how contented! Life had apparently been kind to them. . . .

He passed the church-going crowd and came upon a little park. He had not eaten that morning and realized that he was tired; he sought a shady bench to sit down. He still had no proper excuse for Elsie, for Fred. . . . And he had to have it, by all means. He must not let this step of his cause a quarrel between them. . . . It would never do to have a quarrel. . . . If Anna had only lived, she would have pulled him out of this trouble. She could always appeal to Fred and Elsie with a look. She could make them do anything. . . . Anna — Ännchen. . . . He wept. . . .

Elsie, too, had slept ill that night. She was thinking of her father-in-law. She felt guilty about him. It was excusable in Fred not to see it — he was a son. But she — she should have understood at once.

They should not have pressed her father-in-law to make his home with them. Gottfried Conrad was still hale and vigorous. Some might even consider him in the prime of life. He could have a home of his own for a good many years

yet -- why rush into the arms of old age? Why cease to lead an independent existence? Perhaps her father-in-law was thinking these things when he made such pitiful excuses for not coming to stay with them. Perhaps he was considering the possibility of remarrying at some later date. Such things were not at all uncommon. She was not so sure that they were wrong. She had known some very nice people who had remarried after some time.

She would write Fred about it. He must see it. He must view the situation with an open mind. He must not be unjust to his father. Why had she not thought about it a day or two sooner? Such things are so much better spoken than written.

Would her father-in-law come that day? She hoped fervently that he would. She wished to see him. She would not importune him any more. She would make it plain to him that their home was his home — if he wished it. But if not, they were with him in whatever his desires were. Her concern, and Fred's, was chiefly about his happiness, about his well-being. If he did not wish to part with his home, with his old surroundings in Little Germany, they were with him in his decisions. They understood him; their sympathies were with him. There should never be any misunderstanding between them. She would see to it, she *must* see to it, now that her mother-in-law was dead. She must take up the cloak of family peace that her mother-in-law had left behind.

CHAPTER XII

THE MEASURE OF FRED CONRAD

IT was two days before Christmas. Gottfried Conrad had insisted on buying the Christmas tree for his grandchildren and that evening he was to bring some of the trimmings for it. He was expected to supper and would probably stay over night in view of the weather. It had been snowing heavily all day. Ruth and Robert had been in a state of excitement all afternoon. The coming of their grandfather, though it was of frequent occurrence of late, was an event of supreme thrill and excitement to them every time.

Fred had come home earlier than usual that evening and as soon as Elsie saw his face she knew that something had happened.

"What's the trouble?" she asked, leading the way to the kitchen.

"Why, does it look like trouble?" Fred smiled wanly as he seated himself in the old oak rocker which summered on the porch and wintered near the stove.

"You seem worried," his wife said as she moved the boiling kettle to one side to make room for a fresh pot.

"I don't know as I can call it worry," he replied. "I'm just thinking. I may experience a change of employers soon."

Elsie waited.

"Arthur Bayes," Fred continued after a brief pause, "called at the office and had a talk with me to-day. He wants me to have lunch with him and with Mark Gelder

to-morrow. Mark Gelder has been wanting to see me for some time, Bayes said, so he thought he would arrange a little luncheon for us to meet and talk."

"You think Gelder might offer you a job with the Federation?" Elsie asked quickly.

"Yes," said Fred. "I'm almost certain that that is what he wants to see me about. The Federation voted the other day to put five additional organizers in the field and I was told that Mark Gelder has been keeping an eye on me. I suppose he is coming to town to-morrow to take my measure. That is his way of doing things."

Mark Gelder was the president of the General Labor Federation of America. To become an organizer for the Federation was the next logical position for Fred Conrad to be called to. It was an honor and it meant advancement financially and otherwise. Of course Fred Conrad would not reject it. But he was not keen for it. He was uneasy and would have been more satisfied if they had passed him by, had overlooked him for some time yet. He was at home in the bakers' union, and was afraid of the Federation. He did not feel himself quite suited to it. A job with the Federation often meant politics fully as much as work. And he detested politics. . . . Moreover, he was a little apprehensive of Mark Gelder. The president of the General Labor Federation had of late been launching crusades against the socialists. Mark Gelder, Fred feared, might prove as fanatically against socialism as his father was for it. And he was tired of crusades in either direction. He was weary of politics. Ever since he could remember politics was the cause of strife and discord in their home, the bane of his existence. . . .

"It will mean staying away from home much more often and for longer periods." Fred broke a prolonged silence. "But it will mean more money. . . . We could save quite a

little toward an education for the children. . . . And we might be able to buy a home perhaps. . . ."

A pot needed attention and Elsie was busy for some moments. Fred turned about and glanced into the front room Ruth and Robert were sitting on the sofa and between them were endeavoring to teach the cat good manners.

"A home of their own. . . ." Fred's mind had been revolving about this thought much of late. While he did his work as an organizer for the bakers well and faithfully he had no violent ambitions in the labor movement. It was in his home and his children, rather, that his ambitions reached their limit. He meant to educate his children. He had hoped that his boy would be spared the necessity of doing manual labor. He would never permit his Robert to work nights as he did, to go to work at an early age. As for Ruth, he often, on the way to the office, passed girls who were going to business college. They looked nice and fresh — so different from the girls who passed in an endless stream on the way to the factory at seven in the morning. He meant to send Ruth to business college.

He was not forgetting Elsie. He had ambitions for her too. He pictured her standing on the sidewalk in front of their *own* home waiting for him. She would look good on the green lawn on a summer afternoon. . . . They were selling cozy middle-class homes at reasonable prices in their immediate neighborhood. People were paying off such homes with their rent. . . .

Elsie was thinking of the long lone winter nights that awaited her, for she too saw that Fred must take the job with the Federation. It was promotion. It was the only chance a man in the labor movement had to advance. The money . . .

She was not letting her thoughts interfere with her work.

She watched over the roast and turned over the potatoes with undivided attention. Elsie was very proud of her baked potatoes. They came out as soft as butter and she never burned them.

Supper was ready. She looked at the clock and was seized with anxiety. It was past seven. They were so absorbed in conversation they had not noticed how late it was. Gottfried should have been there for some time. Outside the snowstorm of the afternoon was turning into a blizzard. Fred too had grown uneasy.

"The elevated must be making slow time," he sought to reassure Elsie and himself.

The anxiety of their parents now communicated itself to Ruth and Robert, and they stood pressing their faces against the window-pane in the hope of catching sight of their grandfather. Presently Bob let out a yell of joy. Because of the blinding snowstorm he had not recognized his grandfather until Gottfried's tall form stood on a level with the window. Gottfried smiled when he beheld the children waiting for him and waved his hand to them, but Ruth and Bob were already in the hall and held the door wide open.

Thanks to Elsie, an understanding had sprung up between father and son without the two interchanging a word on the subject. The relation between the two had resolved itself to this: Gottfried was always welcomed in his son's home, but he was never importuned. He came and went as he pleased. Sometimes he would come on Saturday evening and stay until Monday morning. Then again he would come merely for the evening. When Fred was away from home for long, Gottfried would come and help Elsie and the children with the rougher work about the house — they still lived in that small family house in the Bronx. In the winter months he would bring the coal up from the basement and chop kindling wood

for them. In the spring he would fence their little garden, dig up the ground and make the seed beds. Gottfried rather enjoyed working with a spade or ax, digging the soil and hammering nails. It was so reminiscent of the dim past back in Germany.

Part of this tacit understanding between father and son was never to speak of politics As if by agreement, the two always veered their conversation away from anything that was not intimately connected with their daily lives and personal affairs, anything that might stir up discussion. Fred suffered at times keenly for want of such conversation. There were so many things in connection with his work that he was eager to talk about with his father, but he feared to risk speaking about them lest an unguarded utterance rouse the old antagonism between himself and his parent. The field of ideas and ideals was ground dangerous to tread on. Gottfried, too, suffered from these self-imposed restrictions. There were times when he felt that his advice, suggestions from him, might be of value to Fred. But he feared to venture outside the field of commonplace family conversation. His slumbering feelings might wake and run away with him.

Gottfried was devoting himself to his grandchildren with a concern and tenderness that Fred had never known when he was a child. It was not exactly a case of age mellowing, softening him. Back of Conrad's softness was helplessness, the realization of his own impotence and a tragic submission to fate. America had trained his son away from him. Life had broken him and life was the victor. Like a good fighter it was up to him to concede victory and to yield to his opponent gracefully. And he did this. The old cigarmaker — for Gottfried had aged much in the two and a half years since his wife's death — sought now to make the most of the few sunshiny days that were still to be had. His son was a man

and was a thing apart from him. But his grandchildren still clung to him. They loved him, and he delighted in them. He might as well drink in what little joy this attention to Ruth and Robert gave him, for soon they too would outgrow play — and him.

So he would lie awake for hours planning little surprises for his grandchildren. He would watch the stands for nice tidbits and the stores for new toys for them. His pockets were never empty when he came to his son's house.

The period of intense preoccupation with union affairs which followed closely upon his mother's death did not permit Fred to follow attentively the change which was coming over his father. But Elsie noticed it and she watched its progress guiltily. She could never quite cease blaming herself for mis-judging her father-in-law soon after he lost his wife. She had ascribed his disinclination to live with them to a desire on his part to remarry at a later date, when, as she now saw it, nothing was further from Gottfried's mind than such a thought. He was not running away from old age. On the contrary, he seemed to be welcoming it with open arms. Death seemed to have attached him closer to his wife, to the memory of her. Once on a Sunday afternoon in the fall, Fred proposed that they ride out to the cemetery to visit his mother's grave. When they got there they found that they had been preceded. There was a fresh wreath on the grave and the shrubs and grass had been trimmed with great skill and care. His father had left the cemetery an hour before they arrived.

All through the evening Fred was tormented by an irresistible desire to break the self-imposed silence about matters of importance. He was consumed with longing to tell his father about the proposed luncheon the next day with the president of the General Labor Federation and that in all

likelihood he would go to work for that body. . . . He was not in agreement with all of Mark Gelder's policies and still less with his prejudices. . . . He looked upon the whole thing as a job, as work only. . . . He would not mix in the Federation's politics. He would stick to organizing work pure and simple. The Federation was in need of just that sort of an organizer. It had more than its share of politicians. . . .

It would have done him good to have told his father all this and to have got Gottfried's acquiescence, if not consent, to the probable change. He would have felt so much better about taking the job. But he checked himself every time he attempted to speak. They had been dwelling apart so long mentally that he feared it would almost seem theatrical for him to attempt to become confidential with his father once more. . . .

Gottfried had not failed to observe his son's knitted brow. He sensed that Fred was in trouble — was probably struggling with a momentous decision. For a moment he was on the verge of giving way. He was yearning for a heart to heart talk with his son, to see how the boy was getting on, what problems he was facing, to help him face or solve them. It would ease him so to have an intimate talk with Fred once more. But then his caution returned. There was so little joy in his life outside of these evenings with his grandchildren. Why run even the remotest chance of spoiling such an evening with vain if not painful talk? Why? Gottfried stifled his yearnings. He and Fred spoke a few commonplaces and retired for the night. In their separate rooms each gritted his teeth in pain and went on struggling with his unspoken thoughts.

The luncheon the next day proved much less of a bugbear than Fred had anticipated. Mark Gelder had not come alone to take the measure of the organizer of the bakers. He

brought with him the Federation's vice-president, Jim Morgan. Gelder, Morgan and Bayes put Conrad through a catechism during the luncheon, but Fred had to admit that they had done their work not only cleverly but tactfully, very considerately.

Gelder was of course interested in Fred Conrad's views of the socialists. But the Federation's president was always careful in his choice of terms. He had no quarrel with the philosophy of socialism. Philosophies, whether good or bad, are in themselves of no consequence in life. It was with the spokesmen of socialism that he had a bone to pick. He mentioned several labor leaders of pronounced socialist tendencies who were just then attacking him hotly in print and on the platform. He exposed the weak sides of these men — all of them were alien born — the inability of most of them to speak the English language smoothly, their ignorance of America, their oratorical flights which were not always supported by facts, the clumsy foreign atmosphere which attached itself to everything they said or did.

Fred listened to the plaint of the head of the Federation sympathetically. Most of what Gelder was saying coincided with his own experience. There was nothing rabid in his statements, nothing to take exception to. It sounded more like hard practical common sense.

While Gelder was sounding Conrad with regard to his politics, the Federation's vice-president was searching him for something different.

Morgan was anxious to find out how much of a "good fellow" Conrad was likely to prove. Being in direct charge of the organizers of the General Labor Federation, the vice-president knew the value of team work. It was essential that there be cooperation between the various organizers, for it was necessary from time to time to send two and three men

to the same city, and sometimes even on the same job. To get the best work out of them under such circumstances it was vital that they be congenial to one another.

Two days after Christmas Fred Conrad received the offer of a job as organizer for the General Labor Federation of America, as he had expected. He accepted by wire, as instructed.

CHAPTER XIII

KOLB QUOTES FAUST

THE third anniversary of Anna's death was nearing and Gottfried experienced great difficulty in keeping his thoughts at the bench, on his work. Several Sundays in succession he went out to the cemetery and after every such visit to his wife's resting place the incongruity of his position was brought home to him more painfully than ever. . . . It was as if Anna, from her grave, were chiding, reproaching him, were urging him to be more tolerant toward his son — their Fred. . . .

No, he had no business staying with strangers. He was aware of the sorrow which his conduct was causing Fred and Elsie. If they refrained from further urging him to live with them, it was solely because they feared their persistency might annoy him. . . . In the past he found refuge from these vexatious thoughts in exciting plans for a return to socialist activities with his one-time vigor. . . . Now he was becoming sorely aware that there was a lack of driving force back of his thoughts, that they were not going over into action. . . . He had not attended a socialist meeting since Anna's death. He was completely out of the movement. And yet these had been stirring years in the history of the country. A war had been successfully fought by the United States. European immigration was breaking all records at Ellis Island. Great strikes were rending the country in two. The world was moving ahead feverishly. . . .

He was reading the *Arbeiter Zeitung* as usual one Sunday morning when an announcement covering half the page stirred

him. It was a call to socialists to come to a party rally at Freedom Hall. Freedom Hall! Gottfried failed to recall the place. He was certain he had never been there, had never spoken there. Then it came to him as if in a dream. . . .

For years the socialist workmen of Little Germany had been planning the erection of a Temple of Labor, of a home for their societies and activities. This temple was to be known as Freedom Hall. For more than a decade money had been collected for this home at every gathering, meeting, and picnic of socialists. Gottfried had himself frequently contributed to it. And now this Freedom Hall was a reality. . . . Mass meetings were held there. He must go up that afternoon. He was curious to see the building. Besides, it was high time he attended a socialist meeting. He had stayed away from the movement for three whole years! And he had been thinking all the time that he was getting nearer to socialist activity. . . .

The conductor whom he had asked to let him off in the neighborhood of Freedom Hall took him a mile beyond his destination. Gottfried walked the distance back to the Hall and when he got there found the meeting in progress.

At first he thought he was in the wrong place. The crowd was different from any of the socialist audiences he was accustomed to. There was here a preponderance of persons of distinctly non-Teutonic appearance. On the platform a man was speaking in English. The chairman of the meeting was a bearded Yankee who looked and talked like a professor. The speaker and the chairman both mentioned the word socialism several times in the brief few minutes in which Gottfried heard the former finish his address and the latter introduce the next orator, and that reassured him, but not for long.

The next speaker was a lawyer. He spoke with the same intonation with which he might defend a prisoner at the bar. As nearly as Conrad could make out, the speaker was discussing certain passages from Marx's "Capital"; was interpreting these passages for the benefit of the audience, and took issue with certain socialists who were putting a different interpretation upon the same text. The address was entirely theoretic. The speaker was evidently a man who had no connection with working people and their problems. He discussed wages, rent and profit, the trinity of socialism, in as abstract a manner as a scientist might speculate about a star. There was just about as much warmth in his speech as there is in a text book on astronomy. Gottfried was glad when the chairman announced the next speaker.

A pale, delicate individual, who looked as if he had just come out of the seclusion of a cloister, stepped upon the platform. He mentioned the word socialism in the very first sentence, but his speech and mannerisms gave Gottfried the impression that the man, if not actually a clergyman, had something to do with the church, and his instinctive hatred of clergy at once set him on guard. He strained his ear to catch every word the speaker was saying. He had missed his name and was sorry; the name might have given him a clue to the personality of the speaker.

His suspicions were well founded. The man was a clergyman. He traced the socialist theories to the New Testament. He gave a sly little dig to those who thought that in the socialism of Karl Marx they had discovered something new. They were wrong. Long before Karl Marx there was another Great Jew — and a socialist. The speaker's liquid voice rose and fell with emotion when he spoke of the era of brotherhood which "our great cause" would usher in. As he proceeded his address took on more and more the color-

ing of a sermon. He spoke of the commandments, the dogmas and the articles of faith of socialism. Gottfried Conrad expected almost any moment to hear the man wind up his sermon-like address with the sign of the cross and a prayer. But the speaker at this point shifted dramatically, and instead of assuring the audience of a reward in heaven, announced that obedience to the principles of socialism would bring the kingdom of God upon earth.

"Who was this speaker?" Gottfried asked of a young man who sat next to him.

"That," the youth responded eagerly, "is the Rev. Dr. Wesley, Smythe Wesley of the Fifth Avenue Church.

"Comrade Wesley has been converted to socialism within the last two months and this is his first public appearance," the youth further enlightened Gottfried.

"Converted?" the word slipped Gottfried's tongue. But he had already surveyed his youthful neighbor. The boy was of the Wesley kind himself, over-refined, frail, delicate, like a girl. His fingers were long, his hands soft. Gottfried suspected the boy of being a college student — perhaps even a student of divinity — and choked all further questions down his throat. His old hatred of the "parasitic class" was aroused. He drew into himself and sat through the rest of the meeting without saying a word. Other speakers followed. They were men of various nationalities. For the most part they were scholarly individuals from the professional classes. Nearly every one had a penchant for dialectics.

In spite of their vehemence it seemed to Gottfried that there was a lack of sincerity in some of the speakers. They were moved less by the question they were discussing than by the desire to make an impression, to appear cleverer and more authoritative than their rivals. In the case of one of

the speakers this petty egotism and personal vanity came to the surface with such hideous effrontery that the blood rushed to Gottfried's face. He was sick at heart.

When he was in the street again he stood in a daze for some time. He had read in the *Arbeiter Zeitung* of the eternal splits and quarrels within the socialist movement. He recalled, too, having read of the party's reorganization, of the younger element taking control. So that was the new socialist party. . . . That was the successor to the movement which he, Kolb and their friends, the Lassalleans, had nursed and fondled and fanned into life. He was stirred as he had not been in years. He recalled a little story from the second or third reader. It told of a duck that had hatched a little chick along with her ducklings. When she came to a pond with her brood, the little ducks slid into the water after her. But the chick shied and would not be coaxed into the pond. Like the perplexed mother duck, he now failed to recognize his brood. It was strange to him, this scholastic socialism that the lawyers and ministers had kept tossing from the tips of their tongues all afternoon, adroitly, cleverly, as a football player would toss a ball. He had listened to socialist speeches for three hours and had not heard a word or suggestion which had any intimate bearing on the fate of the toiling masses. . . .

The news that Heinrich Kolb was at home ill was brought to him by Peter Reinecke, a shopmate, late in the afternoon, and Gottfried did not go home to supper, but took a bite in a restaurant and went straight to the Willmarts', with whom Kolb was rooming. Mrs. Willmart greeted Gottfried cordially. He was an old friend and she had not seen him in years. He had not been to visit Kolb since his wife's death. To Gottfried's anxious question about Kolb she whispered

that the editor was in a bad way. He was in the parlor. . . . Gottfried could go right in.

Illness had reduced Heinrich Kolb to a shadow. He was sitting in a chair in front of the open window, a comforter wrapped about his limbs despite the fact that it was a warm summer evening. He made a move as if to get up when his friend entered, but Gottfried would not let him raise himself. After the first greeting he pulled up a chair and sat opposite Kolb. Gottfried was so moved by the helplessness of his friend that he was unable to speak for some moments. Kolb's features were drawn and his lips bloodless. The color of his skin was the color of death. Only his gaze retained its youthful enthusiasm. In his eyes softness and humanity were fighting their way to the surface through the undercurrent of suffering.

Kolb dismissed questions about himself, his health, rapidly. What was there to say about it? He was ill, and illness was not a pleasant thing to talk about. But Gottfried, what news did he have? He was eager for news. Gottfried's presence was so reminiscent of bygone days.

The editor was gazing at his visitor delightedly. He had not had an intimate talk with any one in years. Never having married, he had no family; and the friends of his youth, the comrades of another day had dwindled down to almost none. They had families, these friends, children and grandchildren, and each now confined himself to his own immediate circle. Family life does narrow a man so. Gottfried was the least settled of all his friends. He had remained closer to the ideals of their youth than any one of the rest of their group of socialist pioneers. He was still an unbending rebel, uncompromising. . . .

They were talking over their friends — the movement — Neither was the same — Things had changed so. Gott-

fried described the socialist meeting he had attended at Freedom Hall, the audience of "doctors, lawyers and ministers" — the speeches. He did not hide his disappointment.

Kolb laughed a sad, pathetic laugh. He reached over to a table near by, took hold of a little book, opened it and read:

> "Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,
> Und Grün des Leben's goldner Baum. . . ."

"There is the answer, Gottfried." Kolb spoke slowly, with a tragic smile about his thin, bloodless lips. "Theories are gray, life is green. Life is the victor. It is the final arbiter. It has its way over man, over everything. Life will have the things it wants. It will have the sort of socialism it wants, regardless of theories — your theories, my theories. . . ."

Gottfried protested. It was not socialism the younger generation had espoused, not the working-class socialism that they had preached. . . . It was but a shadow of the great dream they had once dreamed, the great ideal they cherished. . . .

"I dare say it is," said Kolb, "but then it is probably the sort of socialism that America seems to want, that it is able to digest at this time.

"I suppose," Kolb continued after a breathing spell, "every reformer comes to see and feel the things you and I are feeling now — if he lives long enough. I wonder if Jesus would recognize in the Christianity of to-day the ideal for which He once bled and died. Nor is the irony of fate at all new. . . . Jesus aimed at Jerusalem and captured Rome. You and I fought priestcraft, the clergy, with the weapon of socialism. Now the clergy flock into the socialist fold; they are becoming its apostles and preachers. . . . Yes, time is a great jester. . . ."

As Kolb was speaking patiently, kindly, ready to forgive every one, to make peace with the world, to make peace even with the new socialist party which was becoming honeycombed with aristocrats and was led by clergymen, Gottfried gazed at his friend with mingled feelings of pathos and solemnity. . . . Poor Heinrich! The service and sacrifices of a lifetime to an ideal were nobly, eloquently written in the editor's face and forehead. And now he was dying, alone, friendless. An intrepid fighter was dying — and he was submissive — He had put his sword into the scabbard. . . .

He lapsed into memories. He forgot what it was they had been talking about. But Kolb came back to it. It was so long since he had talked to any one, since he had been asked for an opinion. . . .

"I am coming more and more to the conclusion," the editor was saying, "that the business of the reformer is to start things only — the finishing Life will do. The business of the reformer is to break ground and sow the seed of new ideas. What the harvest will be he would better not try to determine beforehand. Life, nature, a million forces and accidents will determine that. With the sowing his calling ends. . . ."

And then the conversation became intimately personal. The two friends sat for a long time talking over many things that had been a part of them during the thirty-five years they had been living, agitating and fighting side by side in the New World. Kolb asked about Fred. He had been watching the boy's rise as a labor leader and was mildly exhorting Gottfried not to appraise too lightly his son's efforts in behalf of the organized workers of the country. Fred, though he did not avow himself a socialist, was a builder of progress, aye, even of socialist progress none the less. His work might not set his name resounding from one end of the country to the other, but it was the work of hu-

manity he was doing in raising the standard of living for the workers wherever he put his shoulder to the wheel.

Upon leaving his friend Gottfried did not go straight home, but walked on aimlessly block after block. The streets teemed with men and children though it was nearing ten o'clock; everywhere noise, laughter. A sadness seized him. He went to the nearest elevated station. He would go to the Bronx to spend the night under the same roof with his family — with Fred. The rumbling of the train above his head sobered him, however. It was so late. They would no doubt be sleeping by the time he got there. What excuse would he give for his unexpected visit? He started back for home; he was ashamed.

It was shortly after his visit to Heinrich Kolb that Gottfried Conrad experienced a sudden change of occupation. Otto Bachman — Gottfried was still living with the Bachmans — brought word one evening that Jonas Klein was going to St. Louis to live with his children.

"He is looking for a buyer for his store," Bachman said as they were finishing their meal.

But Conrad was not in the least aware that the remark was intended for his special benefit, and Bachman, after a short interval, blurted out:

"Why don't you buy it, Gottfried? It is a good little business. There is hardly any work connected with it; better than sticking in the factory all your life."

Conrad did not reply at once; he did not know what to say. The thought of quitting the factory for something else had not come to him before. Bachman's suggestion, however, never left him the rest of the evening.

Jonas Klein's bookstore was an institution in Little Germany. It was located near one of the largest halls in the

district and it drew its trade from the workingmen and socialists who came to their meetings there. In the pioneer days of the German settlement, Klein's store was the library of the neighborhood. Now the book trade in it was negligible. The books stood on the shelves well to the rear of the store, yellow with age and thick with the dust of years. The nearest to a book trade Klein had was the selling of socialist pamphlets and socialist periodicals in the German language and the German newspapers. The chief staples in the store consisted of cigars, tobacco, and the personality of the owner.

For to Jonas Klein's bookstore men did not come merely to buy a paper or cigar and go out again. They came to talk things over with the proprietor, to exchange views, to give and get an opinion. Every evening the place was filled with men and the heated conversations and discussions in it lasted well into the night. The more people there were in the store, and the more vehement the arguments became, the more Jonas Klein felt at home. He would indeed feel disappointed if one of the old-timers in the district would come in, get his paper and leave without exchanging a few words about the day's news and happenings with him.

Conrad and Jonas Klein had belonged to the same circle of old-timers which was now fast beginning to scatter. He knew the store, too; had been there many a time, and had had many a discussion with its proprietor. As he lay on his bed at night Gottfried turned the matter over in his mind. It was not a bad idea, this getting hold of the store. He would go up to see Klein. The daily running to factory and standing at the bench was becoming a little difficult. A change would do him good. He wondered how it would feel to have all day to himself to do nothing, practically nothing. He could be reading if he wanted to.

As Jonas Klein was showing him around, Gottfried suddenly stood still in front of a hidden shelf to which Klein had not called his attention, and a spark of mischief fairly shone in his gray eyes. The hidden shelf would be a secret of his own — a secret from his grandchildren. He would hide all sorts of tidbits there and when Ruth and Robert came to visit him he would bring these things out and his grandchildren would not know whence they came. Klein showed him the living quarters. There were two large rooms in the back of the store. Gottfried had difficulty in suppressing his joy. He would fix up the two rooms nicely, he would have Elsie fix them up for him, so that the children could come to him often and stay with him for days at a time, especially when they did not go to school. The bargain was closed and the very next morning Gottfried took his place behind the counter and Jonas Klein was introducing his successor to those of his customers who did not know Conrad. There were few such, however, and all of the customers greeted Gottfried with delight. He felt at home in the little store at once. For the first time in many years Gottfried experienced a feeling that was akin to rest and happiness.

From time to time he ran across his son's name in the newspapers. Fred was nearly always on the road now. He was in one part of the country one week and in another the next. The nineteenth century was drawing to a close amid an unprecedented wave of social restlessness and discontent. The country was dotted with strikes and lockouts from the Atlantic to the Pacific. There was bitter and desperate warfare on both sides.

Fred Conrad's days and nights were occupied with conferences and appointments. The heads of the General Labor Federation of America had soon discovered that his great-

est usefulness was in the committee rooms. There were plenty of oratorical firebrands in the labor movement, but there were few men who could sit at a table in conference with employers and uphold labor's interest keenly and clearly and at the same time inoffensively. Fred Conrad was one of the few and so he was rushed from city to city and from conference to conference to word the final agreement, clinch the final settlement between workers and employers and make these settlements yield to the worker the maximum of benefit they possibly could be made to yield.

Often when Fred Conrad sat in conference with employers he would picture Old Man Gardner sitting in his place. He could hear the old man's voice, always polite, but firm, arguing a point, the point which he, Fred, had in mind. Unconsciously he would find himself acting out the rôle which he pictured the dead Gardner as acting. The men at the table, who presumed that they came from a superior sphere to that of the workingmen and their representatives, often found themselves outdone in courtesy and breeding by the labor leader. Their respect for Conrad grew, and also their apprehension. It was always pleasant to deal with Fred Conrad, but not always profitable. With a more blustering, but a less keen man than the New York baker they might have done better when it came to drawing up the actual clauses of an agreement.

While Fred was working such long hours that he would frequently fall asleep with his clothes on, his father was coming into unprecedented leisure. There was little trade in Gottfried's store during the day, only in the evening. So he spent his days reading, and thinking. A rest from the shop and the cigarmaker's bench was restoring his mental and physical poise. The nightly gatherings and discussions at the store had put an end to his brooding. Gottfried was

himself again. He was reading and watching the signs of the times.

Summer went and autumn came. The last days of November had arrived and one morning four inches of snow lay on the ground. Winter was here; and the year 1899 was dying. The twentieth century was knocking at the gate. Gottfried sat in front of the burning stove and took stock of the world's progress: what did the old century stand for? And what was the mission of the new? He was thinking in terms of humanity once more, and a quiet content was coming over him.

On Christmas Day Gottfried spent only a few hours at his son's home. Less for business reasons than for the sake of the men who would be almost homeless if he stayed away, he came back before nightfall and opened the store for the evening. But for the New Year, Fred Conrad exacted a promise from his father that he would keep the store closed the entire day and would spend it with them. On the eve of the New Year Fred came to take Gottfried home to supper.

There were joyful, chattering crowds on the elevated, but Fred and his father were thinking. Fred had rounded out two years of hard, faithful work with the General Labor Federation, but he was not happy. The Federation and the men at the head of it were not as congenial as he had hoped they would prove. He had not made friends among them. They did not mix well together, and this was beginning to trouble him. . . . He was alone in the Federation and at times this gave him a chilly feeling. . . .

Fred wanted to tell these things to his father, but Gottfried was deep in meditations which were closely akin to Fred's own thoughts. Gottfried, too, was musing over the activities of his son for the past two years. He was count-

ing — the lost opportunities. Fred was not rising. . . . There had been more than one occasion when Fred, had he spoken the right word, would have had the ear of the country, would have become a leader of the masses of Lassallean dimensions. But Fred had missed those opportunities. He had not seen them. His son was a good, honest enough labor leader, Gottfried mused, but he lacked vision, the prophetic vision which he had once hoped his son would have, the vision that lifted men to greatness, to leadership.

Late that evening, when supper was over and Elsie was putting the children to bed, Fred broke the chains of self-imposed silence and abruptly turned the conversation to the labor movement. He sketched to his father the strikes he had handled in the preceding two years. It was an unprecedented number. The employers were lining up against the labor movement as they had never done before. Troublesome times were ahead and there was no promise of a let-up. The years to come certainly would be making history for the labor movement.

"And for mankind," Gottfried added with suppressed feeling. There was a smoldering fire in his voice. Fred looked at his father with a curious uncertainty. Was his father going to speak once more as in the old days when Mother lived? A thrill ran through him. He was longing for such a talk from his father, had been yearning for it for years. They had been so estranged from each other. Such a talk would bring them closer. He wished for it fervently.

As for Gottfried, he was like a lion who after years in captivity had smelled blood — he was beyond restraint. He had broken the invisible seal that had closed his lips and now he was speaking. He was speaking with pain and sorrow. They were entering a new century and a great era in the history of the working class, in the history of mankind.

And his Fred must realize the significance of the new century. It would be criminal on his, Gottfried's, part not to enlighten his son, to let him grope in the darkness much longer. He threw caution to the wind. . . .

Gottfried was pacing up and down the room. Now and then he would stop in front of his son to emphasize a point. Fred looked at his father and was fascinated. It was good to feel the old man's burning breath upon his face once more, it was reminiscent of the past, of the happy days when his mother sat by their side. He listened speechlessly.

"It is the beginning of the end," Gottfried was saying significantly, "and you would better make no mistake about it. Read the signs of the times aright. Don't think that this piling up of strikes is accidental, that these industrial upheavals will be smoothed over and that everything will return to its former state, will assume its wonted stability. No! These strikes are the beginning of a titanic struggle for the possession of the earth and it will not end until the masses are emancipated and are the masters of the world."

Elsie had entered the room, but Gottfried went on without a break.

"The nineteenth century has brought political equality to mankind. It gave political democracy to the world. For the world is democratic to-day in spite of a czar or a kaiser. The republican spirit is at work in every country and it is but a question of decades when this spirit will dominate the whole earth.

"To democratize government — that was the task of the preceding century. The century that we are ushering in to-night, the twentieth century, will democratize industry. It will usher social democracy into the world. The nineteenth century abolished political serfhood, the twentieth century will abolish wage slavery. The nineteenth century de-

throned feudal lords and slave holders; the twentieth century will dethrone capitalism. The twentieth century will be the century of labor's revolt and labor's final domination of the world."

Gottfried swayed and his son caught him in his arms. A cry from Fred brought Elsie to his side and they laid the old man on the couch. It was a trifling spell of dizziness, and a sip of water refreshed Gottfried and brought him to. But the conversation was not resumed. Fred and Elsie hovered about him, quivering with anxiety. Gottfried, too, was meditating soberly. It was the first time in his life he gave way under excitement. . . .

An impending strike of street-car men in Cleveland would keep Fred away from home during the Easter holidays and Gottfried planned to devote himself that day to his grandchildren and to try to make up to them for the unavoidable absence of their father. He came to his son's home much earlier than was his wont that Sunday morning, but Elsie and the children were already out. They had gone to church and he waited for the better part of two hours before they came back.

Ruth and Robert looked fresh and trim in their Easter clothes. The new suit made Robert seem taller, older than he was. In his face there was an earnestness, left there perhaps by the church service, or possibly it was the absence of his father that clouded the holiday for the boy. Ruth was sweet and tender and, as was usual with her, clung to her grandfather delightedly. . . .

Gottfried was not interfering with the bringing up of the children by his daughter-in-law, with their religious training. It was a principle with Elsie and he would not intervene. He

preferred not to think of these things; it was not leading anywhere. . . .

Elsie would spend the afternoon home, and Gottfried started off for Central Park with Ruth and Robert. It was a balmy day and the gray tenements turned out their inhabitants into the streets by the hundred thousands. The park was crowded with men, women and children, all foreign-looking, talking in foreign languages, shouting, gesticulating, drinking in the mild breeze, welcoming the sun and basking in its warm rays.

They found a bench and Gottfried sat silently watching the sea of faces that was surging back and forth. Ruth and Robert were running up and down the grass, Ruth trying to catch her brother and he eluding her. Presently they came and sat down near their grandfather. The earnestness in Gottfried's face communicated itself to the children. They too were watching the crowds, studying the foreign faces and odd dress, trying to make out the strange foreign sound of the languages the men and women were speaking.

Suddenly Ruth moved up close to her grandfather and said:

"You came from the old country too, Grandfather, didn't you?"

"Yes," Gottfried nodded.

"But you don't look like them; you look like *us*," Ruth said defensively.

"I have been here so long," Gottfried explained, amused by the slight apprehension in his granddaughter's voice. It was as if the child would not tolerate having any one confound him, her grandfather, with the men about them, the "foreigners."

"And you don't talk like them," Robert's voice seemed to

brace his sister's unspoken argument. "You talk English."

Gottfried did not answer. He was thinking. Yes, he was speaking English, had spoken it for a long time now. He tried to recall for how long. It was since his wife's death. It seemed as if with the death of Anna the German language had also died for him. Except for the interchange of a few phrases in German with a customer he had no one to talk the language to now.

"Why don't you tell us something about your country, Grandpa? Why don't you ever talk about it?" Robert asked. Ruth joined. Would Grandpa tell them something of the country he came from, of Germany? She saw some pictures of German houses and German people in a geography. They looked so quaint.

For answer Gottfried played with Ruth's curls. He was thinking. His son had never asked him to talk to him about Germany. Germany, Gottfried's foreign manners and foreign tongue, were too much of a reality to Fred. They had caused his boy pain too frequently, as on that night in Cooper Union when the whole audience jeered and laughed at him, Gottfried, and drove him out of the hall with hisses. He had not forgotten that night and the humiliation in Fred's eyes.

But now this Germany of old, and he, the Gottfried of old, the foreigner, had become a dim distant echo to himself and a myth to his grandchildren. They were anxious to hear of that distant, almost legendary, life of his. What was pain and suffering to him once, would be but an interesting, exciting story to Ruth and Robert. . . . That was the way of life. . . . Tears and suffering of the sires when reduced to story form furnish thrills and pleasure to later generations. . . .

He gazed at Ruth and more especially at Robert intently for some moments. Fred's course in life was irrevocable. His son had not come up to his dreams. He had no quarrel with the boy. Fred was honest, scrupulously so, and at heart was an idealist, as radical perhaps as he, Gottfried, was. . . . But — Fred would be no leader, no great leader, at any rate. He had given up all hope of that. As to the House he dreamed of, the House of Conrad. . . .

As Gottfried gazed at his grandchildren, he saw his dream, the House of Conrad, dissolve into mist. Fred was not doing anything for the perpetuation of such a House. It was not a House of Conrad but a House of Gardner that was growing up before Gottfried's very eyes. Elsie was exercising the chief influence over Ruth and Robert. Elsie's uncle, the dead Gardner, had molded Elsie's mind, had to a large degree molded Fred, and was now molding his grandchildren. . . . But was he himself free from blame? Fred was on the road most of the time. . . . Was it not up to him, Gottfried, to take a hand in the bringing up of his grandchildren, to assist in furthering the House of his desires? Yes, it was high time he began to look after Ruth and Robert, to mold their thoughts, direct their vision. They were at the age when children get away from their mother's apron strings physically and mentally. He must not leave it to chance, this House of his. He must take a hand in its molding. Fred was out of his reach forever, but the children . . .

It seemed to him that his grandchildren could be brought nearer to him in thought and feeling and understanding than his son. There were fewer differences between him and his grandchildren than there were between him and Fred when his son was at the age of Ruth or Robert. . . . He had changed much. He was no longer the Gottfried of old. He had learned much. The school of life had taught him un-

derstanding, tolerance. He was beginning to long for peace now, peace with the world, with himself. He was not as extravagant in his expectations as he had formerly been. And he was nearer to the heart of America than he had been in Fred's boyhood. He was a part now of the country and its civilization. . . .

Ruth and Robert were sitting on each side of him. Ruth was still eager for a story about Germany. . . . Robert wished Grandfather to tell about his father's boyhood. Mother was saying the other day that when Grandpa came to New York the city was only about one tenth of its present size. Would Grandfather tell them about those days?

Gottfried gazed into the faces of Robert and Ruth with a tenderness they had never seen there before. . . .

"Some other time," he said, "I will tell you. Not now. The spring sun never warms for long. It is getting colder already. We had better start for home at once. Some other time. . . ."

CHAPTER XIV

THE WIDOW

THERE was a sudden falling off in the number of strikes. Citizen organizations sprang up in every part of the country which sought to act as intermediaries between employers and employees. These reform agencies made the words "mediation and arbitration" their slogan. Neither capital nor labor was to be pushed to the wall. Both sides must agree to arbitrate their differences.

This lull in union activity afforded Fred Conrad a needed rest. For a time, at least, his duties were lightened. His trips through the country for the Federation were neither as long nor as strenuous as the preceding. He spent more time with his family. It was a breathing spell and was welcome. It enabled him to do some looking about. Hitherto he had known only the work side of the General Labor Federation; he was now getting nearer to its human — one might almost say family — side. This intimate view of the Federation and its personnel did not make him happier. On the contrary it filled him with restlessness and at times even with melancholy, for it brought certain fundamental antipathies to the surface. The nearer he got to his associates the greater the distance seemed to grow between them. He was beginning to disapprove of many of their counsels, though he still refrained from giving utterance to such disapproval; he was not strong enough to make his views count. For certain of the Federation's spokesmen he conceived a pronounced dis-

like. It was purely a matter of feeling, of taste; his and their tastes were at variance. These leaders were of coarse texture; there was no fineness about them. They reduced everything to a level of crude materialism. Their interest in the working class, if it had a soul once, was a purely mechanical matter now — there was no vision to it, no ideal.

There were times when Fred regretted his entry into the Federation. He should have stayed with the bakers. There was a bare living in the former job, it was true. But there was peace of mind and an untroubled conscience. It was the other way about in the Federation.

To Fred Conrad the calling of a strike was a responsibility and an ordeal not to be taken lightly. For even if the strike was victorious, it meant for a time at least the pinched faces of little babies, mothers worn with excitement, want, fear. . . . It was not so with a number of his associates. They were different. The "personal equation" which counted for so much with him was frequently lost sight of by them. They seemed to lack in sympathy, in understanding. Some of them even enjoyed a strike for its own sake; for the fighting, for the excitement. It gave them a chance to assert their authority — and, having long played the part of the underdog, they loved to assert authority even to the extent of bullying their own people. A strike filled them with self-importance. It meant staying at hotels, being interviewed by reporters, seeing their names in the newspapers. The petty tyranny and unbridled vanity of these men on such occasions greatly depressed him.

If his father and his socialist crowd were guilty, now and then, of permitting their idealism to break loose from its anchor in the solid affairs of men, many of his colleagues in the labor movement were going to the other extreme. He came to know several labor unions that maintained their

strength largely through resort to violence and terrorism. Then there were labor leaders who sold strikes to employers, who were in the pay of manufacturers.

No one knew the tactics of these selfish, grasping labor leaders better than Mark Gelder and Jim Morgan. Nevertheless they refrained from criticizing them publicly. They feared partly the violence of these men and partly the press. If the newspapers got hold of these facts all organized labor would be besmirched. The good would suffer with the bad; the condemnation of union labor would be universal. So Gelder and Morgan kept silent and permitted this corrupt and lawless element in the trade union movement to roam at will, rather than expose them and risk scathing publicity. "Labor — right or wrong" was their slogan.

Fred's sense of quiet, unostentatious idealism, of whose existence he was scarcely aware formerly — he had always considered himself thoroughly practical — was sorely tried by many other things, which, while they had no direct bearing on his work, nevertheless made the atmosphere in the Federation less and less agreeable. It was an open secret that a number of his associates were leading loose lives. Just as the boys he had known in his youth had had only girls in their thoughts, so these men constantly had women on their minds, not their wives, but other women.

Along with the gossip about these men went, of course, various stories calculated to mitigate and even excuse their conduct. In the first place, their loyalty to the cause of labor was emphasized most eloquently. And to a degree this was true. Nearly all of the labor men who were lax in their personal affairs, were most loyal to their cause and very dependable in business matters. Then came the stories of domestic infelicities. Each of these men was supposed to be unhappy in his home life; the wife was uncongenial, failed

to take an interest in her husband, did not understand him.

There was truth in that too. Fred Conrad had occasion to meet the wives of several of these labor men and he was astounded at the utter lack of congeniality between them and their husbands. Husband and wife were like strangers. There was such an utter want of understanding, of comradeship, between them that Fred wondered how two persons having so little in common could ever have become attached to one another sufficiently to broach the subject of marriage. He always returned home after such an occasion with a feeling of relief and gratitude. He was thankful for his wife, for Elsie. She not only shared every one of his thoughts; she often anticipated them. She was such a faithful companion, so happy in his triumphs, and when things did not go well with him she was more of a comfort than ever.

And his children — there was such understanding between them, such harmony. They were growing up to be such affable, refined youngsters, his Ruth and Robert. When he was in the midst of his family circle Fred would often fall to musing about these men, most of whom were older than he — middle-aged or elderly men running loose with women and being talked about — and pity would seize him. He could not help feeling in such moments of serene domestic bliss that the life of each of these must be an abyss, a tragic, horrible nightmare. It could not be otherwise. Could there be a more ghastly punishment than not to have a congenial home, than to have to reduce man's most sacred, intimate feelings to barter? . . . And when he and Elsie were left alone at such moments he would embrace her with a tenderness and devotion that invariably brought tears to her eyes. . . .

He had to work with these people, however, and sought to adapt himself more or less to these conditions. He assumed an attitude of complete disinterestedness in all personal matters. That was the safest course. He gave no attention to gossip. He wished to hear nothing about the private life of his colleagues. He was not sitting in judgment over any one. He came to see more and more truth in what his father once told him about man being largely the product of his environment. The newspapers were daily bringing to light family skeletons in high places. Society was steeped in filth, corruption and degeneracy. The labor movement, being a part of this demoralized society, had its own skeletons. One could hardly expect anything else.

But Fred Conrad was to have his fiery ordeal.

His aloofness from all matters pertaining to the personal side of his associates had its penalty; it made him poor company. The other organizers came to realize that a trip with Conrad as a working partner was a one-sided affair — it was all work and no play. Of course they knew that Conrad was "safe." He was not a man to gossip or backbite; he was not a telltale. They could go their way without the slightest interference — and they did.

But this had its unpleasant and even embarrassing features. One of these was the matter of expense. Fred Conrad's expense bills were bone dry, and these men, while they were strictly honest in money matters, yet had certain unwritten privileges in the matter of expenditures which they made good use of. Many a little present which a labor man bought for a "lady friend," the expense of many an outing, was charged up to the Federation under the heading of "incidental expenses," which a knowing auditor O. K.'d without question. In Fred Conrad's company it was extremely

embarrassing to ring in such blind expenses into one's expense bill; and when one had to pay for one's diversion out of one's own pocket the fun was spoiled. . . .

This "one-sidedness" of Fred Conrad did not escape Jim Morgan — such things never escaped the Federation's vice-president. He was there to have teamwork in the labor movement and his keen eye soon detected the slightest hitch. Fred Conrad's want of sociability worried Morgan. But Mark Gelder looked upon Fred's "one-sidedness" as a teacher looks upon the poor deportment of a brilliant pupil — he overlooked it. Conrad, to use a current phrase, always came back with the goods. Every one of his trips brought results. The Federation needed just that sort of man. There were many who could carry out orders, but Fred Conrad threw light upon everything he came in contact with. So he was left undisturbed.

Just then the president of the Federation had Fred in mind for a special job. He was holding his plan in abeyance because he was looking for an organizer who would be a good working mate for Conrad on this mission. He did not see such a man among his own staff of organizers and had to go outside for him. He found the man in Bill Triggs, the vice-president of the Transport Workers' Union.

Conrad and Triggs were to go down to Chicago to find out what effect the new immigration from Slavic Europe and Hungary was having upon union labor. Gelder supplied them with a few details; the rest they were to find out for themselves.

Late that evening Bill Triggs, in the barroom of the Kaiserhof, was telling Al Ryan, a lifelong friend of his, and one of the organizers of the Federation, of the proposed trip to Chicago and how pleased he was with it. He wanted to see that city again; had not been there in two years. Ryan

shared his friend's enthusiasm for the Windy City and thought the job splendid. There was no definite task to achieve, no strike to guide through, no victory to fight for. It was a mere scouting proposition, a regular visit to the old town, one might call it. When Bill Triggs mentioned his working partner, however, Ryan's enthusiasm took an unmistakable drop.

"What's the trouble, Al?" Triggs asked.

"Nothing. Only I don't like that man Conrad."

Triggs was greatly surprised; Gelder had spoken highly of Fred.

"He is a good enough organizer," Al Ryan explained. "But a trip with him is like a funeral; he is stricter than a nun."

"Oh," Triggs said with a significant gleam in his slightly bleared eyes. He had been drinking steadily all evening.

"Well," he added after a pause, "if that's the kind of man Conrad is, then I think I shall like the job all the more. I like to break them in. . . ."

Al Ryan ignored the ripple in his friend's voice and counseled earnestly.

"I would leave him alone if I were you, Bill," he said. "Fred Conrad is a queer sort. I guess it runs in the family. His father, too, is queer — one of those eccentric Dutchmen."

"There you go again with your prejudice against the Germans," Triggs bantered him. "I tell you, Al, they are all right. I know some mighty good fellows among them — and the girls are better still."

He laughed aloud at his own joke, but Ryan was in no mood for hilarity. He had been out with Fred Conrad on business trips a number of times and had had his "disagreeable" experiences with him. Ryan was one of the men

with whom Conrad especially avoided going into other than business relations.

It was nearly midnight and Al reminded his friend that if he meant to take that nine o'clock train for Chicago the next morning it was time for him to turn in. The friends parted, Al Ryan starting for home while Bill Triggs climbed two flights of stairs to his room.

The vice-president of the Tran-sport Workers was a man in the forties. He was well built and, in spite of his heavy drinking, was robust. His job agreed with him. The excitement of his life, the change from place to place, the frequent being in the limelight, kept him young. He was married and had two children of whom he was very fond. He was nice to his wife, and his children did not want for anything. But in the matter of morals Bill Triggs had followed his own inclinations. He had thrown all restraint to the wind.

At first he had had his qualms. In time, however, his brooding had crystallized into a philosophy. He had talked to people, read a few books, had gone to hear radical speakers, and gradually his feeling of guilt disappeared and in its place came a feeling of justification. He did not believe in God, not in a personal God that looked after your actions and wrote them down in a big ledger. In the books he had read it was explicitly and rather convincingly shown that most of the institutions we are taught to regard as sacred and God-given are in reality the handiwork of man. Most of the rules of conduct were laid down by men in past generations, and other men — stronger men — of to-day were often disregarding these rules and following their own choices and dictates. Such men were a law unto themselves. And the more he thought about it, the more he felt convinced that these men were right. There was little in life outside the

pleasures one could derive from it, and he yielded himself to the pleasures of life. His unbounded energy and almost boyish restlessness made him many friends. He was welcome everywhere.

They had put in a week's work in Chicago. Fred Conrad had traced the beast to his lair, as he told Triggs. He had spent days and nights studying the immigrant laborers at their homes, in the little colonies which surrounded the plant of the Pan-American Steel Company. He watched them going to and coming from work. He mingled with them in the saloons at lunch time. He learned what their pay was and what their hours were. He was satisfied that he had the problem these unskilled laborers represented reduced to exact dimensions. His mind was made up as to the proper attitude the Federation should take toward these workers. His mission in Chicago was accomplished; their work was practically finished. Triggs, too, had had all the time he needed to fill his part of the bill. They would start for Washington within a day or two.

There was an evening ahead of them, a warm September evening, and their calendar was blank. Triggs mulled over this fact as he sat in the hotel lobby sniffing contemptuously the stuffy atmosphere of the room. Fred was sitting in a large leather chair reading an evening paper and seemingly was quite comfortable and indifferent. As he observed his road partner, a feeling of envy stole over Triggs. It must be good, he mused, to be of a disposition like Conrad's, to be calm and at rest on such a warm September evening; not to want any compensation in the way of pleasure and excitement for the eight days of hard work they had put in.

Bill Triggs had been thinking all day long about the evening. He knew two or three places where he would be welcome. If Fred Conrad were not such a poor specimen of

a sport, there was no end of fun they could have. Of course, he could leave Conrad and go by himself. But it hurt his pride to slink away from the hotel. It looked cheap and the next morning he would feel as if he owed Conrad an apology. . . . Triggs grew morose and fidgety. Fred noticed this and laid aside the paper.

He looked like any one of a thousand men Triggs had known. There were men who had just as austere an appearance as Fred, but who, upon occasion, could outdo the devil. Triggs wondered what Conrad would do if placed in certain circumstances. Still water runs deep, he mused. He had never talked religion to Fred, but he had heard that Conrad was "no fool" in such matters. He certainly must realize, Triggs mused, that life is not going to pay him in different coin than it was paying others. . . . Triggs' instinct for mischief was rising within him. It was fortifying itself with seeming reason. Should he risk taking Conrad along with him? He would; he'd take a chance. . . .

He suggested that they take a trolley ride and get out into the open. Fred agreed. They started northward and were soon speeding through the heart of an Italian district. Conrad watched the crowds of foreign-looking men and women who lined the sidewalks, observing, thinking. Every few minutes the conductor sounded the gong and a flock of little children, who were playing in the street, scampered in every direction for safety. Triggs, in turn, was studying his partner closely and with a gleam of satisfaction. What a laugh he would have at Al Ryan and the others who looked upon Conrad as a little tin god. The fools!

At a transfer point Triggs stepped into a drug store to telephone. After a short ride on the second car they got out. They strolled along for several blocks. The residential atmosphere of the streets, as distinguished from the slums

through which they had passed, was pleasing. The middle-class homes, with the well-cared for lawns, looked decidedly attractive.

Triggs, apparently by accident, discovered that they were but a short distance from where some friends of his lived. They were in plenty of time for a visit. Would Fred care to accompany him? Fred had no reason to cherish suspicions and agreed to everything Triggs proposed. They turned into a side street and stepped upon the porch of a neat two-story brick building. Triggs rang the bell.

A matron in the forties opened the door for them. She greeted Triggs cordially and like an old friend. It was good to hear his voice again, she said. Triggs introduced Conrad and Mrs. Myers — that was the woman's name — assured him that he was welcome. She led the way into the parlor and after pointing out a comfortable seat for Conrad, she proceeded to question Triggs about friends in New York, Washington, Philadelphia. She apologized to Conrad for neglecting him; he must excuse her, the desire to hear from Triggs about mutual friends in various parts of the country was interfering with her duties as hostess, but she wouldn't be long.

Mrs. Myers stepped into the next room and Fred heard her telephone to a friend of hers, a Mrs. Stengel. She reappeared with two bottles of beer, a tray and glasses. As she was bringing the tray toward him, Conrad observed her closely. She had a remarkably fair face. Her complexion was clear; her features, while showing unmistakable strength of outline, glowed with seeming refinement and gentleness. She was magnificently built. She was not forward, but there was a natural voluptuousness about her full white neck, her well-rounded bust and ample hips. Her carriage and manners were those of an aristocrat. She seemed decidedly a

woman of leisure. She did not look like the wife of a workingman, not even of a labor leader. She looked too much petted, too well taken care of, too perfectly preserved for that. The house was furnished after the fashion of wealth. The furniture, drapery, curtains, bric-a-brac — all were expensive and out of the workingman's reach. Fred wondered who the woman might be, what relation she was to Triggs. She had spoken so familiarly about some of the best-known labor leaders in the country, mentioning them by their first names.

There was a ring at the door and Mrs. Stengel was ushered in. She was a brunette — that was the first thing one noticed about her. Her hair, the kind German poets delight in describing as raven black, was parted in the middle and gave her an appearance of child-like innocence and purity. Fred had once had a school-teacher who looked like this woman and he had been very fond of her. She was German, the daughter of a pioneer, a 'forty-eighter, and she was kind to the children, especially the children of aliens. Instinctively Fred was well disposed toward this Mrs. Stengel and upon being introduced to her, shook her hand warmly. It was a pleasant memory of his childhood that the sight of her had conjured up.

Mrs. Myers left Mrs. Stengel to entertain the men while she went into the dining-room to improvise a little lunch for them. She still stuck to the good old German custom, she explained, and with her entertainment always began with eating. But Conrad soon discovered that the eating was insignificant beside the drinking. Bill Triggs was gulping down glass after glass of a French wine. Mrs. Myers and even the demure Mrs. Stengel, it seemed to him, were drinking far beyond the proper limit for a woman to drink.

Fred drank moderately on all occasions. Here he drank even less than usual. He felt apologetic for participating

in the little celebration at all. He did not know the people. They were friends of Triggs, but that did not justify his making himself at home there as if they were his friends.

Triggs gulped down a large glass of wine, and Fred observed his bulging eyes with alarm. He sought to convey to his friend a warning to stop drinking, or he would have to be taken to the hotel in a cab, and that would be disgraceful in company.

The next instant, however, Triggs' arms closed about Mrs. Myers' neck and he kissed her repeatedly on the mouth. Mrs. Myers tried to free herself from his embrace, but not too energetically. She feigned embarrassment and scolded him, but there was something in her words and actions that belied her embarrassment and her displeasure. Mrs. Stengel clapped her hands and, laughing heartily, turned a look full of significance upon Fred. In a subtle and seemingly unintentional manner she swung about so that her side rested against Fred's arm, against his chest.

The relations between Triggs and Mrs. Myers flashed upon Fred Conrad, but he still could not bring himself to designate the woman and the place by their proper names. It seemed unthinkable that they were — that he was in a house — it must be something else — What?

Had Fred Conrad been less self centered and less indifferent to the stories that were floating around in labor circles — stories of good times in Pittsburgh and of larks in Chicago — the personality of Mrs. Myers, her home and her friends, would have been no mystery to him. Mrs. Myers was known in the labor movement widely, though exclusively, as "the widow." An introduction to "the widow" even after one knew of her character was not easily obtained. She was not of the common herd. Only select men enjoyed her favor.

Mrs. Myers was the widow of Bert Myers, who in his day

was a noted labor leader in Chicago. Before her marriage, she was an actress attached to a German stock company. When Bert Myers married her he saw at once the need of extending his income — if he was to keep his wife — and he extended it. After Bert Myers' death — he was shot in a brawl — there were stories in the newspapers about graft he collected from employers — blackmail and the like. However, as he was dead, that was the end of things.

The union gave Bert Myers a splendid funeral. A neat sum of money was voted to his widow, and Charlie Fry, a lifelong friend of Bert's, headed the committee which took the money and condolences up to Mrs. Myers. The Myers had had no children and that was something to be thankful for, under the circumstances. Thereafter Fry was a frequent visitor at the Myers home.

One evening, a month after her husband's death, Fry found Mrs. Myers at her home, in low spirits. It was raining and the gloom of the elements readily communicated itself to the human mind. Fry was explaining these things to Mrs. Myers and was urging her to cease worrying. It was imperative that she cease wearing herself out. It would ruin her health. And health was just exactly what she needed. God knows she did, if she were to take care of herself — a woman alone in the world. . . .

At the last words, spoken by Fry in great sorrow, Mrs. Myers could not keep back her emotion. She wept. Fry comforted her, and in that way the greater part of the evening passed. It was nearly midnight when Fry rose to go. Mrs. Myers went with him to the window. The rain was beating savagely against the porch and glass panes. The warmth of the house felt good. She shuddered lightly; there was just the least coyness in her shuddering; she was irresistible. Fry clasped her in his arms. Her head drooped upon his breast

like that of a tired child. The rain did not let up and Mrs. Myers was convinced that it would be a shame to let a man go out so late at night in such a rain, especially when there was a spare bedroom in the house which he could have just as well as not. . . .

That was the beginning of Mrs. Myers' fame in the labor movement. Her circle of friends grew with years, but it grew discreetly. Her friends were as cautious about her reputation as she was herself. The little parties which were held at her home several times a week never deviated from the outward signs of respectability. Mrs. Myers had cultivated a number of pleasant, discreet young women like Mrs. Stengel, divorcees and widows, whom she invited from time to time to make these parties a success.

All of these things Fred Conrad might have known. However, once the curtain of respectability was drawn aside, the nature of the place had become clear to him, and his immediate concern was how to get away. He could think of nothing else. His disgust, shock and disappointment were quickly subordinated to the thought of getting away. He no longer heard what they were saying. He was alarmed and ashamed.

They had moved into the parlor. Mrs. Stengel, emboldened by drink, was casting challenging glances at Conrad. She could not quite make out the man. She had been far more forward with him than she had ever been with any one else. Yet he stood there and seemingly failed to understand her suggestive remarks and veiled invitation. She gazed at him perplexed, puzzled. She did not know what to do, how to treat him.

Mrs. Stengel's boldness revolted Conrad. He was furious. He had conjured up the pure and lovely image of his teacher, only to compare it with a lewd, wanton woman. He choked with rage. He would have liked to get his fingers at Bill

Triggs' throat. He would have liked to tell Triggs what he thought of him. As for the women — If he hadn't been a guest at their house and eaten and drunk at their table he would have insulted them. He did not feel justified in doing so now. They had not invited him and they had been nice to him, according to their understanding, to their ways. . . . He was angry clear through. Outwardly, however, his stifling resentment manifested itself merely in embarrassment. Mrs. Stengel interpreted his embarrassment in her own way and whispered a suggestion that they go home.

"Yes," he nodded. He meant to explain to her that he did not have in mind the things she had, but he could not speak. Mrs. Stengel was doing the talking now. She was taking leave of Mrs. Myers and of Triggs. Mrs. Myers shook hands warmly with Fred and Bill Triggs slapped him on the back confidentially. Both he and Mrs. Myers were too drunk to read aright the expression on Fred's face.

It was one of Mrs. Myers' unbreakable rules to keep regular hours. No matter how little she slept the night before, she had to be up in time the next morning, just like every other woman in the neighborhood. It was this fact of her keeping strictly to the standard of middle-class conventions that enhanced her value with her admirers. At Mrs. Myers' house one was always safe from scandal and from any unpleasant occurrence. It was strictly a "home" and she was strictly a "home woman."

Accordingly at eight o'clock the following morning, only a short time after Bill Triggs had left the house to take a car to the hotel, Mrs. Myers was busy in front of her range getting her breakfast, when there was a ring at the door. It was "Crazy Emma," as she affectionately called Mrs. Stengel. Mrs. Myers was curious and a bit perturbed. What was

Emma doing there at such an ungodly hour! As usual, however, her calm exterior did not betray her ruffled mind.

Mrs. Stengel raged like a tornado. It was not the first little party she had attended at Mrs. Myers' home, but never, never had she drawn such a "dead one" as she had in that man Conrad. Why, she could not sleep all night. He had insulted her, frightfully. Imagine, he had been sitting there all evening, gaping like an idiot, until, exasperated, she took the initiative and suggested that they go home. It was hard to be so forward, but she thanked her stars when it was over. They had started for home. He walked with her to the end of the block, bade her good-night — and walked away! The — !

In spite of all caution and training by Mrs. Myers, Mrs. Stengel gave way to a paroxysm of profanity. Mrs. Myers listened to it at first smilingly; she relished a good bit of temper now and then. But when Mrs. Stengel threatened to become too noisy she warned her to calm herself; it wouldn't do to lose all caution. Mrs. Myers took down a fresh jar of jam from a shelf in the pantry and Mrs. Stengel at once became interested. Jam was her weak point. . . .

Mrs. Myers, in the meantime, called the hotel and got Triggs on the wire. She gave him a version of Mrs. Stengel's story. There was no anger in her voice — she never lost her poise over the telephone or elsewhere — but it was serious, so serious in fact that Bill Triggs cut the conversation short and started back to her house in hot haste. He wanted to get every detail of the happenings of the preceding night in person.

When Fred Conrad came down to the hotel lobby in the morning he failed to find Triggs and waited for him. His anger had subsided. He had made up his mind to treat the whole matter lightly. He was not going to reproach his part-

ner for the unpleasant situation in which he had placed him; he would treat it as a joke. That was the best way out of it. He could not afford to quarrel with Triggs, to make an enemy of him. But Triggs was nowhere to be seen. Fred went to breakfast by himself and lingered at the table longer than usual, thinking that perhaps Triggs would come in any moment. He returned to the lobby of the hotel and sat around until nearly eleven o'clock, when the vice-president of the Transport Workers came in.

Triggs' voice was dry and metallic. He made not the slightest allusion to the night before and plunged right into business. There was nothing more for them to do. Their investigations were closed. Triggs communicated some of the information he had obtained the day before to Conrad. There was an object in this: he was not going back to Washington with Fred. He had a little matter in St. Louis to attend to and would take a night train for that city. Fred could make the report to the Federation by himself.

Conrad was a bit awed by the turn affairs had taken. There was blood in Triggs' eyes — there was no mistaking it. By noon their business was wound up. Triggs went out. Fred went to his room and packed his grip. He took the first train out of the city.

CHAPTER XV

THE HAND OF BILL TRIGGS

THREE days after the episode at the widow's house, as Fred Conrad opened his morning paper, Triggs' picture was staring him in the face. It was on the front page. The accompanying story told of the appointment of William Hawley Triggs, the noted labor leader, to a high post in the National Citizens' Alliance. Triggs was to head the newly founded "Division of Labor and Industry" of that organization. The record of the man as a labor leader and a citizen followed at some length and was couched in glowing terms. Triggs' character was described as lofty and high-minded, his reputation unblemished.

A smile which played about Fred Conrad's mouth as he read these lines vanished. The matter was not to be disposed of lightly. It was of great consequence to him. The National Citizens' Alliance was an organization that was much in the limelight and was variously viewed in the labor movement. The Alliance was financed by the leading manufacturers of the country, and had the word "reform" for its slogan. According to its spokesmen, the mission of the Citizens' Alliance was to end all industrial strife and abolish class bitterness in America. Leaders of labor and representatives of capital were urged to "get together" at conferences, luncheons, dinners which the Alliance was arranging. They were to talk over at these "get together" dinners their common problems and differences and to realize that there was a

"community of interest" between employers and employees. Such a realization, the Alliance believed, would tend to abolish strikes and to further the peaceful settlement of all difficulties between labor and capital.

The radical element in the labor movement looked upon the Citizens' Alliance and its millionaire backers with mistrust. Its confabs between labor leaders and capitalists were jeered at as "pink tea" affairs intended to dazzle certain trade unionists. The motive of the Alliance, the radicals declared, was to gain a dominating influence in the Labor Federation by turning the heads of a handful of its leaders. The socialists especially were vehement in their denunciation of the Alliance. They called upon the trade unions to be wary of the "gift-bearing Grecks." Back of these "society" dinners and entertainments, they warned, was the sinister design to devitalize the class solidarity of the workers and thereby draw the fangs from the trade union movement.

Fred Conrad had his strong misgivings about the Citizens' Alliance, but would not accept the socialist view of it hastily. The entry of Bill Triggs into the Alliance's highest councils, however, removed all doubt. The fact that Triggs was for the Alliance automatically put Fred Conrad against it. He and Triggs were at the opposite ends of the pole in their attitude toward the labor movement. Triggs looked upon the movement as a vehicle for his personal ambitions. It was something that was to serve him first and foremost. Triggs' entry into the councils of the Citizens' Alliance meant that in a short time he would dominate the labor movement of the country. Mark Gelder and the rest would be pawns in his hands. . . .

Fred recalled the evening at Mrs. Myers' home, the repellent appearance of Bill Triggs as he was drunkenly kissing the woman. He recalled Triggs' face the next morning

when they met at the hotel. Triggs' eyes had blazed with suppressed anger. There was murder in them. As an enemy Bill Triggs was known to be relentless, deadly. . . . Triggs *was* his enemy, and he was in power now. There was trouble ahead and plenty of it. . . . Fred had a feeling of a storm slowly gathering. . . . However, he would preserve his calm. . . . He would wait and see. . . .

Within a week of the appointment of Bill Triggs to the Citizens' Alliance, two labor leaders, who had for years been prominent in the Federation, received political appointments. One of the men was made the head of a newly created bureau of labor for the State of New York. The other received a similar appointment with the Federal Government. It was common talk about the offices of the Federation that both men received their appointments at the suggestion of the Citizens' Alliance. The effect of this was electrifying.

All sorts of extravagant rumors with regard to further appointments of labor leaders were afloat. With the same disgust with which Conrad in the past had often seen certain of his colleagues groom and primp for "dates" with women, he now watched them groom and primp for possible political jobs. Just as in the past these men had cultivated their looks, so now they were attempting to cultivate manners. Their speech frequently was affected. A grammar made its appearance on the desk of one of these labor men; another spent days and days trying to make his signature look more businesslike, the letters in his name stubbornly refusing to be joined together. On another occasion Conrad found the vice-president of the teamsters' union, Timothy McGraw, absorbed in a little book entitled "Manners of Polite Society." The veneer of idealism with which these men from time to time shielded themselves was discarded. They were in the labor movement for selfish, grasping reasons. And now they

were using the movement to climb to still better and softer jobs. They were more and more guarded in their speech about employers and about men of wealth generally, as if fearing that an occasion might arise when their words would be taken against them. Bill Triggs had become the inspiration of these men. They swore by him, and shielded the Citizens' Alliance from all attacks and criticism.

The attacks on the Citizens' Alliance and the criticism of the labor men who were participating in its councils were gaining, however, in frequency and in vituperation. The radical element in the labor movement, headed by the socialistic *Voice of Labor,* was pouring vitriolic abuse upon "Mark Gelder, Bill Triggs and Company" for "hobnobbing with the plutocratic Citizens' Alliance."

"The Citizens' Alliance would make you believe," the *Voice of Labor* jeered editorially, "that it is trying to usher in the day when the lion and the lamb will lie down together. Blind leaders of Labor, beware of the mockery of future generations! The Citizens' Alliance is a wolf in a sheep's skin. It is here not to propagate the golden rule but to destroy the labor movement, to slay it from within. . . .

"They fought the union movement when they thought they could crush it in a fight. Now that organized labor is too strong to be crushed in open battle, they have changed their tactics. Instead of strangling you with a rope they are trying to smother you with kisses. Mark Gelder, Bill Triggs and Company, before you sit down to the next dinner with the millionaire members of the Citizens' Alliance just go over in your minds the Alliance's recent activities in the labor movement. Take stock of these activities and see what they amount to. Has not the Citizens' Alliance weakened every strike it has put its finger in? Has it not emasculated every victory of the union? Has it not weakened the labor movement by

diluting the class consciousness of the working people with such phrases as 'the community of interests between capital and labor'?

"Who supports the National Citizens' Alliance? No secret is made of it. It is an organization financed by employers — the very employers who have been the bitterest enemies of labor in the past, who resort to spies and thugs and are introducing the dreaded Pinkertons into our ranks to intimidate and imprison labor leaders, and to break the labor movement. When these men come and tell you they have experienced a change of heart toward the trade union movement, why don't you ask them whether they have discharged their detectives, whether they have fired a single spy? They have not — and you know it. These employers are as brutal as ever. They eat with you, they flatter you because it pays them.

"The labor leaders who feast at the tables of the Citizens' Alliance are either fools or crooks. Either they are deliberately hoodwinked or else they crawl to the Citizens' Alliance because they see the prospect of a fat political job in it. The labor movement sooner or later will see through the folly or the crookedness of these, its false leaders, and then will come a bitter day of reckoning."

Mark Gelder, as President of the General Labor Federation, could not ignore the attack of the socialists. He did not defend the Citizens' Alliance, but he defended his position and the position of his colleagues toward it. He never attempted to deny that the Citizens' Alliance was financed by capitalists, by employers. He did not care how it was financed, by whom. He, Mark Gelder, was ready at any time to answer questions concerning labor to all comers. If the capitalists of the country wished to know about the aims of the labor movement he was willing to enlighten them. Yes,

he was willing to go among these capitalists, as a missionary goes among the heathen, to bring the words of truth and justice to them!

The Federation was now definitely divided on the issue of the Citizens' Alliance. The younger radical element was arrayed against it. The older and conservative unionists passively followed their leaders. Fred Conrad decided to take no part in these wranglings. He would stand aside. He had work to do. It was a relief to be busy, to have to take orders and not to bother with the raising of issues and the framing of policies.

He was not quite sure that this shrinking attitude of his was entirely right. It certainly was not heroic. It might even be construed as selfish. He was becoming critical of himself. Where did he stand? The foreign speech, mannerisms, of the socialists he had known in his father's house, had roused in him an antipathy toward the advocates and spokesmen of socialism. But in this case he shared their viewpoint. He saw through the Citizens' Alliance; he detested it. What should he do? He knew what his father would have done in his place. He could see his father stand up single-handed and carry on a struggle against the Citizens' Alliance, against Mark Gelder and the rest, from the platform and through the columns of the *Voice of Labor*.

Fred could not picture himself doing these things. He knew it would be futile. Were he to start a campaign against the Alliance, against Mark Gelder and Bill Triggs, his campaign would come to nothing. He could see the results shape themselves logically, clearly. Of course, his father's struggle, too, would have been futile. But while his father could readily and ardently undertake a futile struggle and not see its hopelessness, not believe in defeat, he could not. It seemed to him, at times, that in this respect he was older

than his father. His blood ran cooler. He was harder to thrill. His mind was disenchanted.

That came from his mother, Fred mused — the fear of being unpractical, the fear of losing out, or going against the stream. From Mother, yes, and a little from Uncle Gardner. Old Man Gardner was so cautious, so hard-headed. He always took a tolerant but a condescending view of his father and Gottfried's Don Quixotic dreams, as Gardner phrased it. Yes, he had been a shrewd, calculating Yankee — Uncle Gardner.

And when he was impotent to defend himself against his self-criticism, Fred would brood over his fate which had not brought him into the world with nerves like his father's, with blood like his father's. He could see injustice as quickly as his father; he resented it as sharply, but he could not pounce upon it as readily and recklessly as the old man would. He was too much of a calculating American. That and his mother. . . . Blood would tell. She was always so timid — crushed all her life long.

At such times of introspection and self-criticism, he felt painfully the want of friends, men friends. It was hard to be alone with one's thoughts always. He had kept Elsie in ignorance of many, perhaps too many, of his difficulties. His sense of delicacy and refinement prevented him from telling her about the coarser side of some of his colleagues. It was sufficient that he had to know it, had to put up with it. She should be spared even the suspicion of these things. . . .

One day Conrad made a discovery that at first he tried to make light of, but which upon closer investigation alarmed him. It seemed to him that certain persons about the offices of the Federation were shunning him. When he talked to them they showed impatience. He thought perhaps his brooding had put him in a disagreeable mood and that his own

harshness reflected itself in the conduct of others toward him. He assumed a friendlier attitude and sought to mingle more with the people about him. The shock was even greater His attempt to be pleasant was resented. It seemed to him that every one was eager to be rid of him. One or two looked upon him as if he were an intruder, a person not to be trusted. Some passed him on the street without recognizing him. The whole thing had the earmarks of gossip. Some one had slandered, calumniated him. Who? What had he done? What could they say about him?

He had a brief furlough and went to New York to spend it with his family. Home and family always set him right. After a few days he felt his poise returning. The happenings at the Federation headquarters did not seem so serious at a distance. He had a pretty good notion whence these libels against him emanated. The invisible hand that was striking at him was curiously like the hand of Bill Triggs. It was Bill Triggs' policy to belie and libel every man he feared. He did it in a roundabout way — always the same way. Fred Conrad had no difficulty in recognizing it. Bill Triggs had not forgotten the incident at the widow's; that was plain. And he was trying to disarm him, trying to make him harmless, in case he talked.

This tracing of the gossip about him to its lair had a quieting effect upon Conrad. After all, Mark Gelder was the head of the Federation, not Bill Triggs. He would go back to his job with his accustomed energy and he would let the results of his work speak for him. As far as he was concerned, the incident at the widow's home was dead and buried. He would never mention it; he had never thought of mentioning it. Triggs might even get to see this and cease campaigning against him.

It was false security Fred Conrad had lulled himself into.

CHAPTER XVI

PRISON

AT the outset of his career in the Citizens' Alliance it was made clear to Bill Triggs that his work and the aims of the Alliance could be furthered most effectively if he kept alive his friendships in the labor movement. Friendship was the keynote. He was not only to keep his old friends, but to cultivate new ones. That way lay success for him and for the Alliance's plans and undertakings.

The doors of Bill Triggs' imposing and spacious office, in consequence, stood open to all comers. The friends who came to visit him were impressed by the office, impressed by the importance of his job, and impressed still more by his democracy. Success seemingly made no change in him. He was the same old Bill. Every such visitor sent another. The ex-vice-president of the Transport Workers was a capital fellow. His new job but served to show up his sterling qualities. Triggs was a stanch friend of the labor movement generally and of every labor man individually. He was worth calling upon — and he could do a man a favor. He had influence; he walked with the great. . . .

One day Al Ryan dropped in on him. Al had come from Washington on a little confidential mission for Mark Gelder. Ryan's stock as an organizer was rapidly going up and Triggs was glad to hear that: he was always glad to see a "friend" rise. He closed his desk and they went out to have a drink and to lunch.

They talked over many things as they ate. Al Ryan was

full of news about men in the forefront of the labor world. Fred Conrad's name came up. Ryan had not changed his opinion about the man; he had no use for Conrad.

"He does act queer at times," Triggs agreed. "I have been wondering why Mark Gelder does not drop him. He has not the temperament for an organizer. Didn't you say that his father was an eccentric old German?"

What Ryan knew about Fred Conrad's father was mostly hearsay. He did not know Gottfried Conrad personally, but he had heard that he was one of the pioneers in the German colony.

"The old man was quite a celebrity in his young days," Ryan said. "He was one of those German exiles, a revolutionist or something on that order. Now he keeps a little bookstore on —" the name of the street escaped him, but the old man could be located easily. Any one of the old-timers in the German colony would know where old man Conrad's little store was.

Triggs, though he was eager to get more detailed information about Fred Conrad's father, turned the conversation to something else. He meant to get at Conrad, to destroy not only any influence he might have, but his very usefulness, if possible. However, it was just as well to use caution even among friends.

His duties as the head of the Division of Labor and Industries had been made exceedingly light for Bill Triggs. The plans of the Department were laid by Walt Kinsley, the secretary-manager of the Citizens' Alliance. Triggs' functions were largely advisory. The secretary consulted with him and submitted things to him now and then for an opinion, or approval. Triggs, too, was to spend considerable of his time outside the office. He was to accept invitations to all sorts of luncheons and dinners and was to make addresses.

The subject of these addresses was to be the growing need of harmony between capital and labor, and how the National Citizens' Alliance was planning and promoting this harmony. These speeches were written out for him by Walt Kinsley and the secretary-manager of the Alliance likewise saw to it that they got into the newspapers.

One day when his duties were more than usually light, Bill Triggs thought of Fred Conrad's father. He would go down into the German colony and try to locate him. It might be worth while to have a look at the old man. He stopped on Third Avenue in front of a quaint little harness shop. The place had an Old World atmosphere. Triggs imagined that precisely so a harness shop must look in a German town. In such a quaint place, too, a man would probably be found to correspond. He was not mistaken. A white-haired individual who walked with a slight limp from too much sitting came out from the rear room, which was the workshop, and greeted him. The aged German mechanic perceived at once that his visitor was not a customer. Well, of what service could he be to the stranger?

Triggs explained his mission. He wished to know the whereabouts of a man named Gottfried Conrad, an old-timer in the German colony. Could the harness-maker perhaps help him out?

Gottfried Conrad? The old German beamed with pleasure. Who would not know Gottfried? He gave Triggs specific directions. He was to walk straight ahead to the third corner, turn to the right and walk on the left side of the street. About two thirds down the block Conrad's little bookstore was situated. He could not miss it.

The harness-maker did not look as if he would be averse to a brief chat about old times, and Bill Triggs seemed to possess a fair knowledge of the leather industry. It was a

nice little shop the old German had, Triggs suggested. There were not many small harness shops left these days. Yet in former years harness-making was quite a trade. Of course, it was still a big industry, only now it was in the hands of the big leather companies and they were forcing the small man to the wall.

The reference to the injustices of the big leather companies struck a sympathetic chord in the old German. Yes, the big factories were at your throat all the time. They had taken an industry and killed it. The harness they were putting out these days with their advanced machinery could not last half as long as a handmade set. The factories had played havoc with the trade. Of course, the old harness-maker personally did not mind their competition much. He had his customers who would not look at a factory-made harness; he had his trade. Besides, he did not need much. His children were all grown, married. He could retire any time he wished to. His children were always after him to retire. But he declined. It was not easy to give up a business one had spent a lifetime to build up. He had been in that one place for thirty-five years. When he came there there were vacant lots a-plenty in the neighborhood. His oldest son used to play right there where the gray tenement stood —

Oh, yes, Gottfried Conrad was the same age as he was. They came over about the same time from the old country. Perhaps Conrad was here a year ahead of him; not much more though. Yes, Conrad had been a very important figure in the colony in his day, mostly among the socialists, of course. . . . A good-natured smile spread over the old German's face. In his youth he, too, had been a socialist, but business success had forced him little by little to withdraw from the movement. One could not very well be a business man, deal with business people, and be seen at socialist meetings. But

he was not at all averse to the socialists and he could not understand the hostility toward socialism on the part of Americans. He was wondering what his visitor's attitude toward the socialists might be. Bill Triggs noticed his inquisitive smile and assumed a lofty, benevolent air. If he did not agree with the socialists he was tolerant of them. Every man was entitled to his opinions. He was greatly interested in the old times the harness-maker was speaking of, in the socialists of those times and in what Gottfried Conrad was then doing.

It was during the Haymarket Riot in Chicago, the old man narrated warmly, that Gottfried Conrad was at the height of his fame. There was no one that could make a speech like him. He would pick the case against the anarchists to pieces and assail the police and authorities until he had his hearers wild with indignation. Whenever Gottfried spoke, police were massed in the street; the reporters from the big English papers always were present, and there was a column in the paper after every such meeting.

But Gottfried was no longer what he used to be. Since his wife's death he had been keeping to himself a good deal. His little store? Well, he was mostly busy evenings. His customers were all working people. They were the freethinkers, socialists, anarchists, among the old-timers, and they hung out at Gottfried's bookstore nights, talking and discussing things. Yes, Gottfried was a match for them, all right. He was mighty well educated for a workingman.

Triggs found Gottfried's little store, observed it in passing, came back some minutes later and entered it. He bought a cigar, and while taking the first few puffs, glanced at the walls covered with shelves of old, dusty books. He hastily examined the newspapers and pamphlets that lay spread on a table. They were socialist papers and pamphlets. The

Voice of Labor was among them. On its front page was an attack on the Citizens' Alliance and his name figured in the headline. Alongside of it lay a stack of anarchist pamphlets. Triggs started for the door without speaking to the old man behind the counter, though he had observed Gottfried carefully. He thought it best to leave no recollection of himself with Fred Conrad's father.

He had plenty of time and went over to the library. In the newspaper files covering the period of the anarchist case in Chicago he found a description of a meeting at which the German workers of New York protested against the trial and execution of the Haymarket prisoners. Gottfried figured as one of the chief speakers. A long paragraph was devoted to an especially vehement denunciation by him of the Chicago authorities and of the capitalist class. Triggs copied the paragraph. He found a few more quotations from Gottfried's speeches in subsequent issues and copied them, too, carefully, making note of the date and the publication. He whistled to himself as he left the library. Well, well! What would Mark Gelder say to this? With the socialists attacking him for years and years, attacking him even more fiercely now for his connection with the Citizens' Alliance, he was keeping a socialist — he had no doubt that Fred Conrad was a socialist at heart — in the councils of the Federation. No, there would be no trouble in getting rid of Conrad now. But he must use discretion; he must not rush. He would bide his time; he could afford to wait.

He did not have long to wait.

Triggs had barely seated himself at his desk when Mr. Kinsley entered. The secretary-manager of the Citizens' Alliance handed him a morning paper and pointed to a marked item. He waited while Triggs read it. The item

was headed "New York Labor Leader Jailed in Indiana" and told briefly of the arrest at Red Bank, Indiana, of Fred Conrad, a labor leader of New York and Washington, who came to take charge of the strike at the plant of the Durham Machinery Company. The arrest came at the close of a turbulent demonstration which followed an address to the strikers by the eastern labor man.

Did Bill Triggs know anything about the situation in Indiana? It was rather strange that this should happen at the Durham Machinery Works. Cyrus M. Durham, the head of the company, was a member of the National Citizens' Alliance. He was a generous contributor to its funds and an enthusiastic supporter of the harmony idea between capital and labor. Mr. Durham was a broad-minded man and a fine citizen. He stood for law and order at all times. There must have been a strong provocation for the seeming bitterness of the labor struggle in his plant. Did Mr. Triggs know this man Conrad? Kinsley had no recollection of the name, had never run across it. What manner of man was this Conrad? Was he a bona fide labor leader? Was he well known in the labor movement?

Kinsley had a peculiar way of speaking. He spoke fast, as if he were always in a hurry, had to catch a train or something of the sort. His speech, too, had a certain intonation which in an unaccountable manner conveyed to the person addressed a very decided suggestion as to the sort of answer he looked for.

Bill Triggs caught this intonation. He sensed the nature of the answer Kinsley expected of him. It was a pleasure for him to give the desired answer, especially since it concerned an enemy of his, a man he hated bitterly. Yes, that was his chance to "get" Fred Conrad, to clear him out of the way once for all. His plans were growing, maturing, mo-

mentarily. They were becoming clearer and more positive as he spoke.

Triggs was speaking slowly and with seeming apology. One might easily have believed that he was greatly grieved by the item in the paper — grieved for Conrad, grieved even more for the good name of the labor movement which was being dragged into the mire. . . .

Did he know Conrad? Yes! He had had some dealings with him at one time and upon this particular occasion had vainly tried to steady the man's violent views. But after he learned of Conrad's antecedents, he gave up having anything to do with him. Of course, he saw what a danger the man was to the labor movement. However, he expected that Mark Gelder and Jim Morgan would themselves wake up to it. They would no doubt wake up now that Fred Conrad had dragged the name of the General Labor Federation in the mire.

Still, Triggs did not wish to be hard on either Mark Gelder or Jim Morgan for failing to see through Fred Conrad sooner. The Federation had grown to immense proportions of late. In such a movement it was inevitable that a hair-brained, yes, even bad, man would smuggle his way up to the top now and then. . . .

The tone of seemingly deep sorrow for the Federation, for Mark Gelder and even for Fred Conrad, with which Triggs spoke, his vague allusion to Conrad's antecedents, set Kinsley on edge. What were Conrad's antecedents? He was anxious to know more about the strike leader, the type of man he was.

Bill Triggs obliged him with a description of the bookstore in Little Germany which was kept by Fred Conrad's father, "the well-known German anarchist, Gottfried Conrad." The little store was really not a store at all, Triggs

explained. It was a blind, a hang-out for anarchists. Gottfried Conrad himself was an old man now and no longer active, but in his younger days he was a notorious character. During the Haymarket riot, especially, this old man drew to himself nation-wide attention. He nightly addressed meetings in defense of the Chicago anarchists, his comrades. These speeches, because of their violence against the rich and vituperations against law and order, against all government, frequently led to riots. . . . It was a strange coincidence, Triggs said smilingly, but only recently he had occasion to look over some newspaper files in the library and he ran right into several of this man Conrad's speeches. They were so astounding and so violent that he was moved to copy a paragraph here and there. He believed that he had one or two of these paragraphs in his desk; he would see. . . . He fumbled for some moments and produced the paper which contained the excerpts from some of Gottfried Conrad's garbled speeches of long ago.

Kinsley glanced through these items and ordered his stenographer to run them off on the typewriter. . . . Well, it seemed to him that there was work to do right there and then for the Citizens' Alliance and for Bill Triggs too. It was a crime to have the better, law-abiding element of the labor movement misrepresented by the escapades of such men as Fred Conrad. It was these Conrads, these anarchists that constantly put the labor movement in the wrong light before the public and fastened upon it the stigma of lawlessness. . . .

They had a little heart-to-heart talk, Walt Kinsley and Bill Triggs. Did he think Mark Gelder and Jim Morgan would look upon the situation in Red Bank, upon the exploits of Fred Conrad, as they, Triggs and Kinsley, were looking? Would the Federation have no objection if Fred Conrad were brought to justice, were made an example of? Bill Triggs

thought that Mark Gelder and Jim Morgan would stand on the side of law and order. Moreover, he would apprise Mark Gelder about Conrad's antecedents, distasteful though it was for him to carry talk about any man in the movement.

"It won't be necessary to do that," Kinsley assured Bill Triggs. "The newspapers will give Mark Gelder all this information and spare you the trouble. I shall give the facts you told me and the excerpts from these speeches to the press as soon as I have communicated with Mr. Durham."

Bill Triggs shrugged his shoulders, still sorrowfully.

Kinsley hastened to his own office. He at once dictated a telegram to Cyrus M. Durham, the president of the Durham Machinery Company. The National Citizens' Alliance, the burden of his message was, had come into possession of important information showing that Fred Conrad did not represent the best element in the labor movement. He, Conrad, was known as a dangerous visionary and anarchist and the law-abiding element of the labor movement had for some time been looking askance at his activities and recognized that he was a self-seeking, dangerous demagogue. If the Durham Machinery Company cared to proceed further against the labor leader, the Alliance would cooperate with it to the fullest extent. It would not be an unpopular fight, as there was no doubt that the law-abiding element of the trade union movement would unhesitatingly throw the anarchist overboard. Particulars followed by mail.

To begin with, the arrest of Fred Conrad was of no significance. The Durham Machinery Company expected nothing from it; it was purely an act of reprisal. The strike was going against the company, and Armour Britten, the manager of the concern, for want of more effective weapons, took to harassing the strikers. A number of pickets were arrested.

Fred Conrad made capital of these "provocative tactics" of the company, interpreting them as signs of weakness. If the men held together quietly and patiently a little longer they would win, he exhorted them. Armour Britten saw himself losing out and pushed these raids upon the strikers with greater vigor. He sent a number of his hired strikebreakers to a mass meeting which Conrad was to address. They could start no trouble at the meeting, but their opportunity came at the demonstration that followed. The strikebreakers started fights in several places. One of the men aimed especially at Conrad. Though he could not get into a fight with the labor leader, he asserted that Conrad struck him, and the latter was arrested along with a number of strikers.

Conrad demanded a jury trial and was released on bail. It was the first time in his career as a labor man that he had been arrested, and it annoyed him. Nevertheless, he felt certain of the outcome. He would never have to stand trial. As soon as the strike was over the charges against him would be quashed. That was the way such matters usually ended.

Nor did the company officials think differently. Mr. Durham himself looked rather askance at the tactics of his manager. Armour Britten was a new man with the company and had come but recently from Chicago. It was quite evident that he was trying to run things at Red Bank as they were run in the big cities, and Mr. Durham was rather nervous about it.

As a wide-awake employer, Cyrus M. Durham knew, of course, that manufacturers were resorting to just such tactics as his manager was employing in order to break a strike. He knew this and he knew more. He had among his acquaintances and friends men who did not hesitate to attempt to trump up charges and send strikers and their leaders to jail on false accusations if a strike could thereby be broken.

He knew these things and he knew the detective and strike-breaking agencies which, for proper remuneration, were willing to assist in such "framing up" of strikers and labor leaders by supplying false witnesses and manufactured evidence. He had always hoped that he would be spared the necessity of having anything to do with these agencies and their breed. But now Armour Britten had made his plant a headquarters for just such loathsome individuals. Really Armour Britten might manage things a little more quietly, a little more diplomatically, Mr. Durham kept saying to himself. It was different in large cities. There a man did not know his employees. There if an employee went to jail it meant nothing to his employer. It was only a name. But here there was an individual behind every name. Why, he knew nearly every one of his employees personally. . . . No, Red Bank was no place for such high and mighty tactics as were employed in Chicago. . . . Mr. Durham was going to speak to his manager. He meant to tell Britten that he was laying it on a bit too thick, with his hired guards and detectives and sluggers. . . .

The telegram from Walt Kinsley changed the aspect of the situation entirely. Armour Britten was on top once more. He was the sagacious, brilliant manager again; Durham admitted that. Yes, Britten knew more of the lawlessness of organized labor than Cyrus M. Durham ever dreamed. Britten now had a free hand. He was to go ahead with the strike any way he saw fit.

The manager at once sent for the company's attorney, Clifford S. Wellman. Mr. Wellman read and re-read the telegram carefully.

"That word 'anarchist,'" he announced finally, "sounds good. It will win the strike for us before the week is over." He dictated a reply to Walt Kinsley. The Durham Machin-

ery Company, the telegram stated, had proceedings under way against Fred Conrad. The charge of disturbing the peace, upon which the labor leader was arrested in the first place, was only a preliminary. The case was going to the grand jury for action. While the company had all the evidence necessary to ask for an indictment of the labor leader, it would none the less welcome whatever aid the National Citizens' Alliance could give it in its fight on lawlessness and anarchy. Would Mr. Kinsley please forward all information concerning this man Conrad by wire to avoid unnecessary delay?

Toward evening of the third day following his arrest, Fred Conrad was approaching his hotel when a friend, a union man, tapped him on the shoulder. The man held out a copy of the *Red Bank Evening News*. Across the entire page ran an announcement that the grand jury had indicted Conrad on charges of conspiracy and inciting to riot. He had no time to assimilate the shock, when in the lobby of the hotel he was approached by two men who flashed a shield and a warrant. He was under arrest. They would not permit him to write out a telegram or to telephone the union's lawyer. They hustled him into a waiting cab and made a dash for the jail.

Conrad expected the union's attorney the entire evening, but he did not come. It was a long night and the morning was even longer. It was past nine o'clock when the union's lawyer, Mr. Seymour, finally put in an appearance.

The lawyer was flushed and angry, as if he had just emerged from a scuffle. The officials had put all sorts of obstacles in his way, he explained. He was there last evening trying to see Conrad, but they gave him no access.

"There is something very sinister behind this thing," the attorney said with uneasiness. "Somebody has cooked it all up very skilfully. It is the most beastly frame-up I ever

heard of. This town is on the map all right, all right. . . ."

He had a batch of newspapers with him, the Chicago morning papers, and he handed them to Conrad.

"The story is the same in all of them, word for word," the lawyer explained. "It was all cooked in the same kettle apparently. The headlines are a trifle different — one more lurid than the other."

Had the account which he was reading been a chapter in a novel it would have held Fred Conrad spellbound. But it was not a novel he was reading. It was the first page of a big metropolitan daily. It was supposed to be the truth, the world would take it for fact. And yet it was a devilishly concocted mass of lies about him, Fred Conrad. His breath was short, his throat dry, his lips parched. The lawyer asked him whether he wished a glass of water. The question itself had a cooling, sobering effect. Conrad went on reading. . . .

The story had been written with the intention to thrill. It seemed from the account in the Chicago newspaper that the peaceful little community of Red Bank, Indiana, was experiencing a civil war on a small scale. The forces of law and order there were fighting against the forces of anarchy. A trifling disagreement between the Durham Machinery Company and its employees had been seized upon by these forces of lawlessness which were personified in the fiery leader of the strikers, Fred Conrad, and the little local grievance had been turned into a war on all law, and order, and government. . . .

Then came the story of "this man Conrad." Nobody was exactly able to account for the man. In some mysterious manner this anarchist had managed to smuggle himself into the ranks of law-abiding trade unionists and was using his position as a labor leader to promote his erratic ideas and dangerous anarchistic aims. . . . The supposed biography of

Conrad followed. He was born in the slums of New York and was the son of the notorious old German anarchist, Gottfried Conrad, the bosom friend of John Most, etc., etc. . . .

Intertwined with the story of Conrad's "lurid past" were quotations from his father's speeches in defense of the Haymarket anarchists — the excerpts which Bill Triggs had diligently copied from the files of the New York newspapers. The wedging in of these excerpts had been so manipulated as to convey the impression that it was a quotation from a speech of "this man Conrad" that the reader was perusing and not a speech by his father a score of years back. . . . The brazen falsification, the boldness of the distortion, were staggering. . . .

The story left Fred Conrad so stunned that the lawyer had to assist him in composing the telegram to Mark Gelder stating that the whole thing was a frame-up and asking for prompt assistance by the Federation. The lawyer took the telegram to send it off forthwith. He would be back at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Mark Gelder needed no telegram to tell him that the thing was a frame-up. He saw it at a glance. But he saw something else, too. Whoever was reaching out for Fred Conrad was making a determined job of it. The labor leader seemingly had made a mighty enemy; he had antagonized powerful forces. Prison was ahead of Fred Conrad, unless . . .

The alternative was to throw the weight of the entire Labor Federation in defense of Conrad. It meant a long and costly battle to assail the mighty forces that were arrayed against him, to expose the frame-up. Such a fight would draw international attention. Conrad would be made an international figure, a marytyr. . . .

Was the General Labor Federation ready for such a fight

in behalf of Conrad? Could it afford to antagonize forces that could so array the press and the country against the man? Was Fred Conrad worth making such sacrifices for? Gelder scoffed at the suggestion that Conrad was an anarchist. But the president of the General Labor Federation had noticed that there was a lack of what he termed wholesomeness in Fred Conrad's devotion to the labor movement. Fred was well intentioned, but he did not seem to mix well with the labor element. He did not seem one of the men. He always stood apart, soared a trifle above the rest of the crowd. . . .

Mark Gelder was pondering over these things when the telephone rang. A newspaper was asking for a statement on the Conrad case. "Not in," he murmured, and the girl at the telephone echoed it across the wire. Jim Morgan and Al Ryan arrived, each with a stack of morning papers under his arm. They had been reading every word they could find about Conrad.

Gelder called them into his private office. What was their view? What stand should the Federation take in the matter? The papers had already been asking for a statement and it would have to be forthcoming soon.

Al Ryan was the first to speak. It was too bad, but it was the sort of thing to expect from Fred. Conrad was well meaning. He was honest. He, Al Ryan, would vouch for his honesty. But he was a bear — a German bear. He could choke you with his honesty. The thing was a frame-up, no doubt. But this only showed that Fred Conrad had been rousing animosity, had been provoking people. Bill Triggs had often remarked that he was surprised that the Federation had not dropped Conrad long ago. Triggs considered the labor organizer a sort of iconoclast, a fanatic in certain ways. Instead of making friends, Fred Conrad was

antagonizing people. He was eccentric, like his father, an old German radical.

Mark Gelder listened thoughtfully. What Ryan was saying was common sense. The labor movement was no battleground for gladiators of *isms,* of radical theories on the one hand, or for eccentric, impractical people on the other. It had no use for iconoclasts. It needed men who could get along with people. Yes, Fred Conrad had no business antagonizing such forces as he had. Mark Gelder had more than an inkling who the forces fighting Conrad might be. He had heard from several sources that Fred Conrad was considered out of place in the councils of the Federation. He had himself more than half suspected that all these sources went back to Triggs. Triggs was against Conrad; the National Citizens' Alliance was against him — powerful forces, bitter enemies. . . . In this world every man was paying a price for the place he was holding. Every man had to compromise more or less to get on. He, Gelder, had paid a price and a large price, too, for his place. He had gained his position as a leader of the laboring masses by permitting himself to be led in turn by his lieutenants. He could defy capitalism, defy the newspapers, now and then, but he could not defy the picked men of the labor movement, the officers of the various organizations, who were making him what he was. . . . He had to give in to their desires frequently, to suit his words and deeds to their convictions — or lack of convictions. Yes, if a man wished to get on he must stick to the crowd. . . .

What did Jim Morgan have to say.

Morgan agreed with Ryan. Al was talking sense. There was a queer streak running through Fred. He was not popular. In certain quarters there was a pronounced dislike for him. Morgan was inclined to believe that the choice of Con-

rad as organizer was a mistake to begin with. He was a misfit in the labor movement. His stand against the Citizens' Alliance, too, left much to be desired. Conrad never was outspokenly against it, but it was no secret where his sympathies lay. He was not a socialist in his politics, but he was one in temper, in his fanaticism on certain things. . . . It was conceivable that the Federation might be called to defend labor leaders of greater value than Conrad from just such a situation as the latter was in, and it might be well not to waste ammunition now. . . .

Mark Gelder listened attentively. It was evident, convincingly evident, that Fred Conrad had no friends among his associates. Were he, Mark Gelder, even favorably disposed to the organizer he would have to listen to the voice of his lieutenants, to Morgan, Al Ryan, Bill Triggs. They were against Conrad. They all refused to stand by him. The Federation therefore could not stand by him. It was not pleasant to reach this decision. But then Conrad should have looked out. . . . He should not have made enemies. He should have paid the price, whatever it was. . . .

Twice during the conference Mark Gelder had been informed by his stenographer that the reporters were outside, waiting. "Send them in," he called to her.

"Gentlemen," Mark Gelder addressed the newspapermen, waving aside all questions, "I presume you wish to know where the General Labor Federation stands with regard to the Red Bank case. I can say to you what I have said on numerous other occasions. The labor movement has always stood for law and order and opposed violence of any description. Its attitude is unchanged to-day. Any member of organized labor who violates the law lays himself open to the same consequences as any other citizen. The Federation sees no reason for any action on its part in the case of Fred Conrad.

It can trust the courts to deal with him as fairly as they would with any other citizen and it will let justice take its course."

Jim Morgan and Al Ryan exchanged glances. They knew what Mark Gelder's statement meant. Fred Conrad had been thrown overboard by the Federation. . . . He would have to fight his battle alone. . . .They were glad to be rid of Conrad, but the thought of the prison sentence that awaited him left them scared and uncomfortable.

The lawyer was an hour late. As he came in he handed Fred a telegram. He opened it nervously. It was from Elsie. His father had locked the store and had just come over to elude reporters and photographers. The New York papers were filled with all sorts of lies about him, Fred. She was going to the bank to draw money. She would leave the children in care of his father and start for Red Bank that night.

"Anything from Gelder?" Fred asked.

Without a word the lawyer handed him an afternoon paper with Mark Gelder's statement. Fred read it and his face was ashen. He did not speak.

"They have put your bail up to $20,000." The lawyer spoke in a lifeless manner. "I had expected that the Federation would come to our assistance. The union alone can never raise such a sum."

Fred Conrad failed to notice when the lawyer went or how he got back to his cell. He had a feeling that he was in water up to his chin and that the ground was slipping from under the tips of his toes. He could not even make an outcry. . . .

He sat motionless for a long time, then he rose and walked up to the window. The sun had already set and a gray autumn mist was descending upon the roofs of Red Bank's

middle-class residences. . . . He had always dreamed of such a middle-class home for himself and Elsie. . . . One by one lights appeared in the windows. . . . Here and there a family was sitting down at the table. . . . Evening was coming, evening and peace — to fathers, to wives, to children. Children — Elsie — Somebody was moaning, somebody inside of him seemed affrighted, alarmed. . . . Now that somebody was pulling his jaws apart — was trying to make him laugh. No, never! He would not laugh by force. No! He fell face to the pillow and bit into it hard — harder. . . . He would break his jaw but he would not laugh — No, sir! He stamped his feet — he raved. . . .

Somewhere some one was talking in a loud voice. . . . It was coming nearer. . . . His arm felt as if it had been clamped by a vise. . . . He sat up. A man was speaking — shouting. Was he addressing him? Oh, he understood — he remembered now. It was the jail attendant. He had brought him his supper. . . .

CHAPTER XVII

PEACE

IT was the second letter Elsie was writing to her husband since they parted in the Red Bank jail, and it was to reach Fred in prison a day or two before Christmas. She had been a long time planning it. She wanted it to be a cheerful letter, one that would set him at ease — hence her extravagance with coal that evening. As soon as she assured herself that the children were asleep she put an extra half-pail full of fuel into the stove and the warmth quickly diffused itself through the room and through her blood, attuning her sweetly, tenderly. . . .

But she kept her tenderness within bounds. It was not as in the past when she wrote for Fred and Fred only. Her letters to him now were read by the prison authorities first and it was well to moderate the expression of one's feelings. Besides, there was a great deal of news to be crowded into the letter. In her first writing to him she had had little to tell; she was still unsettled, dazed by the trial. Things, however, had turned out much better than they had feared in their parting hour. They had feared the worst, but, thank God, it had not come to that. She was spared all coarse labor and did not even have to leave the house all day. The children were looked after by her as usual, and yet she was earning a livelihood for them. Of course they had to live very close for the time being, but when she became more proficient in her work she would earn more and things would ease up all round for them.

As for her work, it was astounding what luck she had had. Fred, no doubt, remembered how fond she was of embroidering, especially during the first year of their marriage, just before the child came. Fancy sewing had been a hobby of hers since she was a little girl. She had picked it up from her mother in the long winter evenings in Belfair and on warm summer afternoons. . . . Well, she had put this ability to account. She went up to a factory where they made the finer articles of women's wear and applied for a job. She was set to work making boudoir caps. After two days' practise in the shop she was permitted to take the work home. That was good fortune. At home she was her own boss; she could choose her hours. In fact, she never sat down to work before Ruth and Robert were off to school. She was there to give them their dinner at noon and supper in the evening. After supper, she went back to her task and Ruth frequently sat by her side and watched her. She liked to handle the satins, ribbons and laces that go into the making of these caps. Before long Ruth would be a help to her. . . .

It was a fortunate move she made in leaving the Bronx and taking rooms on the East Side. Of course they had no conveniences in their two rooms. They were cramped, too. But they were near his father, and that was worth everything. Gottfried's store had become a second home with Robert. . . . The boy spends every spare moment there, talking with his grandfather or browsing among the books. Most of these books were in German, and Robert, of course, could not read them. But for that very reason they provoked questions and Gottfried was always telling the boy something. The child comes home every day with some story about foreign countries and peoples which Grandfather had put into his head. In the house Robert had become so much easier to manage, docile. . . . He obeys everything she tells him

without question. This also was due to the influence of the little store, to the talks with his grandfather.

"Father," she wrote, "never tires speaking of you. He drops in daily, even if only for a moment, and it is so good to see him. One does not feel the loneliness so. Saturday it rained and Robert spent the entire day with Grandfather in the store. For the first time he talked to the child about your plight as one would talk to a grown-up, explained the reasons for your absence. . . . He told him it was an honor to suffer imprisonment for truth and right. . . . He spoke of ancient peoples, and how from the beginning of time such things had happened. . . . In Greece, he said, a philosopher was made to drink poison because he would not desist from teaching the truth. . . . And it was not at all new for honest men, the best, to be sent to jail along with thieves and cut-throats. . . . He read to the boy from the New Testament where Jesus was crucified between two thieves because He flayed the hypocrites and scourged the money changers, the capitalists of his day. . . .

"There was a wistful look in the child's eyes when he came home. He talked about you all the evening and he has been talking about you every evening since, so that I sometimes have difficulty in getting him to sleep until late. He keeps telling me and Ruth how nice it will be when you get back home. He is planning what he is going to say to you, and what we are all going to do, when we are together again. . . . I love to hear him talk so and to see his brow wrinkle in serious thought. . . . But when he begins to ask too many questions Ruth scolds him and calls him a chatterbox. She suffers keenly for want of you, but she does not let on readily, she does not speak. She keeps her troubles to herself like a grown person. She is already becoming a regular little woman. . . ."

The closing lines of her letter were a plea for peace. She, his father, they all had found peace, and she begged him to find it too. Revenge was not for the poor man — he must realize it by now, after what had transpired in those three days they had sat side by side in the court at Red Bank. She realized that his life was trying, but she entreated him to be patient, to offer no resistance, to make no protest. He was to keep in mind always that his two-year sentence meant only eighteen months if they could find nothing against his conduct. He must give them no chance to detain him a day longer. They were waiting for him — waiting, counting the days. . . .

It was midnight when she finished the letter to Fred. In the stove the fire was dying and the house air was becoming colder. She still had an hour's work to do but decided to leave it for the next day. She felt as if it were a holiday. . . . The room seemed permeated with her husband's presence. She read her letter over once more and she was satisfied. It was a good letter. . . . She had put the best appearance on everything. She went over to the cot where Robert was sleeping and tucked the quilt snugly about him — it was going to be a cold night. Then she slipped into bed quietly so as not to wake Ruth, pulled the quilt over her head — as she used to do when she was a little girl — and wept. . . .

As the train was speeding Fred Conrad to the state penitentiary on a warm afternoon in the late autumn, the smell of the freshly-plowed soil rose to his nostrils. Fred had frequently ridden on trains through beautiful fields, but never before had the odor of the soil seemed so sweet and balmy. He drank deep of the breeze and it felt good. It soothed him and lifted his despair. . . . But there was more than sweet-

ness and balm in the breeze that swept across the open, soft earth. Language seemed to emanate from it and speak to Fred, telling him of great wonders that hitherto had remained unknown to him. It told of vast plains and of a wide world where he had never set foot. He listened to the breeze and his heart seemed to be knitting together — healing. Yes, life was beautiful — and he would not surrender the smallest claim to life. . . . The sentence which he had received that morning no longer seemed so formidable — he would overcome it. . . . And at home things would order themselves somehow until he got back. . . . And then — when he got back — he would be a wiser man. . . . The freshly-plowed fields were shedding a new light upon life and its problems. . . .

He was impregnable to prison atmosphere, indifferent to prison discipline. Nothing surprised him, nothing shocked him. . . . Everything was as it should be — as he had expected. He did as he was told, lived as he was ordered — bodily. But his mind had found wings. In his mind he was free, free as he had never been before, and serene. . . . He dreamed with his eyes open and he dreamed in his sleep. . . . He dreamed of forests and streams and rivulets which he and his son Robert were exploring. . . . He dreamed of a little house, a log cabin, hidden by giant pine trees, where he sat of an evening smoking his pipe before retiring for the night. . . . The noises of the prison just before waking frequently translated themselves in his very last moment of slumber into a neighing of horses and a tinkling of cowbells, and he would wake with the odor of pastures in his nostrils. . . .

He liked best to think of a farm in California. It was at the other end of the country, California — away from New York; far removed from the East, from the scenes of his many labors and final disillusionment. He wished to be as far

away as possible from these places, and from the men he had known, had dealt with — to forget them. They were not worth remembering, not worth thinking about. . . . In the prison library he found an old geography and he read all it contained about California. He studied the illustrations, the ox-teams and man-trails of the distant land, and was transported. There was a map of the United States in the book. Between New York and California lay many states, many hundreds, thousands of miles. . . . His heart beat wildly at the thought of the distance that would lie between himself and the scenes and places of his past. . . .

Overnight, Indian summer had come to an end. The sky overhead was leaden; it rained and drizzled. In the prison corridors it was always twilight now — in the cells, always night. Every one was gloomy; men spoke with a scowl. Two or three prisoners who were friendly to Fred in the first few days now ignored him. Every one seemed more than usually preoccupied and did not wish his path crossed by any one, for no reason. The prison authorities redoubled their watchfulness.

There were extra guards in the shop during the day. . . . Several prisoners seemed to be looking for trouble, but the guards studiously overlooked them. The rains which preceded the first snow always brought depression and hysteria into prison. Men were ready for trouble at the slightest provocation, or no provocation at all.

Fred Conrad told himself of the necessity for keeping his nerves steady, of not yielding to the gloom which had swooped down upon the prison. And it seemed to him that he was successful — that he was exercising control over himself. But the prison melancholy had taken hold of him none the less. He became aware suddenly that he had been acting

like a thoughtless youngster and not at all like a man who was in as much trouble as he was. He was dreaming, he was letting his imagination run riot. He was lulling himself into a false security. Take the thought of California, of a farm there. What a beautiful dream! Never once had he taken into account the obstacles that were in the way of his plans. He pondered all day in the shop over these obstacles and did not sleep half the night. . . . It was his first sleepless night in prison and the reality of his life was beginning to weigh him down with its ghastly fingers. The air in the cell was choking. . . . He rose and stepped up to the door. There was no use trying it — it was barred. He was caged in like an animal. He was a prisoner just like the rest of them, and he had been taking things calmly, indifferently, all this time, as if he were there merely as an observer who could come and go as he pleased. . . . He had been dreaming beautiful dreams. . . . Bubbles. . . . Reality was hard, crass, maddening. . . .

He was struck by a peculiar submissiveness in the eyes of most prisoners. They moved out of the way of officials, guards, keepers in much the same manner as a cat or a dog gets out of the way of a large and suspicious looking boot. He recalled the first time he had disciplined his little son Robert. Robert was then only four years old and after the pain of the chastisement had subsided, the child had sidled up to him hesitatingly, submissively, and had looked at him with big, scared eyes. Amid uncontrolled sobs he was wooing his father's forgiveness, suing for peace. The expression in his son's face had cut Fred like a knife. He had taken the child in his arms, kissed him, fondled him until they were friends once more. But he had felt guilty toward his son, guilty for having frightened him with his superior, tow-

ering force. The dog-like expression in his child's face was stamped indelibly on his memory. Time could not efface it. The recollection of it pained.

The prisoners looked to him just like such chastised children who were suing for peace. There was the look of the beaten dog in their faces. They realized that they were hopelessly defeated by the superior, invincible forces that were arrayed against them. Their eyes curried favor and forgiveness of every one who had the power to make their lot easier.

A new prisoner was brought in. He was a lad of nineteen and was to serve a ten-year sentence for burglary. He was pale and thin and looked as if he had gone hungry for a long time. His features were frail, almost feminine, and he gazed about him hopelessly. The details of the charge against the boy soon filtered through the prison. There was nothing heroic, nothing exciting, about the case. It was the old story, too common to arouse interest. He was out of a job, his room rent had not been paid and he had not had a full meal in days. . . . He stole some silver and the police got him. . . .

Fred was now studying the faces of the men about him. There were many young men among the prisoners. He learned the story of several. Their crimes were connected with money, the illegal procuring of money. Want had landed most of them behind prison bars. Some of these boys were sadly deficient in education. They were in need of training, the kind of training that would enable them to hold their ground in the crush and struggle for bread. Instead they were kept rotting in jail. The injustice of the world and the stupidity of men were indeed appalling. The more he observed and thought the more the prison appeared to him as evidence, not so much of man's depravity, as of society's incompetence.

One afternoon his brooding took an unexpected turn. The new boy prisoner had been put to work beside him, and Conrad needed but to take his eyes off the boy for a moment and at once he would begin to see, feel, at the bench next to him, not the boy prisoner, who was a stranger to him, but his own child, his son Robert. . . . He tried to engross himself in his work and knock the foolish thought out of his brain, but it would not be knocked out. It stuck fast. . . . Yes, his son Robert was standing at the bench. . . . Robert, in prison stripes, serving a ten-year sentence for burglary. . . . He had been hungry and his room rent was not paid and there was a chance to take some silver, so he took it — and they caught him, and jailed him, caged him for ten years — ten years!

A terrible thought seized Conrad. He could not bring his mind under control. . . . He looked about. There was no one he could ask assistance of, talk to. . . . He was afraid — he feared he was losing his mind. Was that the way people went insane? No, really he must compose himself. It was nothing, just weakness. Of course Robert was not there, could not be. He was a child and was with his mother now, with Elsie. He must think of Elsie. . . . Elsie would not fail him now. . . . She never failed him. . . . She seemed to hover about him until it was five o'clock and then the day was over.

He welcomed the cell. He threw himself on his bed, buried his face in the filthy sack of straw and kissed Robert's feet and begged forgiveness of his son, forgiveness for the crime he had committed against him. He had no business bringing the child into the world. . . . It was a crime to bring human life into a world that cared so little for human life. It was a crime to have children in a society that crushed and ground and devoured its own offspring. . . . He cried and moaned and tossed on the narrow cot, vainly imploring sleep

to come to his relief. . . . And then he was making a speech. . . . He was pleading for the boy prisoner, for Robert, for all children. . . . The world must not trifle with childhood, he warned threateningly. . . .

When he awoke he at once felt the change in the atmosphere. It was frosty and bracing. The maddening patter of the rain had ceased through the night. . . . His health and poise were coming back to him. It was a narrow escape from madness he had had. Late that day they handed him a letter, Elsie's letter. And his mind recovered its wings. . . . He could dream once more. . . .

The week between Christmas and New Year he was a very normal and a very sympathetic prisoner. He had a benign look as if he were on the verge of giving a present to every one who crossed his path. The peace and patience Elsie urged in her letter had descended upon him. And it was well that it had. For he had been under observation all week, though he was not in the least conscious of it. The prison officials, from the warden down, had found an excuse for taking a good look at him. And on the afternoon of New Year's Day the good news was brought to him. He was to report to the bakeshop the next morning. One of the men who worked there was to be discharged in a few days and Fred was to take his place. They were in need of a real baker; they had not had a professional for years. And if Fred was such a professional baker, then he was the man the prison authorities were looking for; things would go well with him. There was no doubt about Conrad being a professional baker. The entire prison knew it when they tasted the bread of the next baking. At the end of a week he was in complete charge of the bakeshop. It felt good to give orders and to be consulted, to be a leader once more. The prison did not weigh so heavily. . . .

Whatever it might be in the summer, in the winter months the bakeshop was the pleasantest room in prison and Fred would occasionally hum to himself mentally, if not vocally, as he worked. With the mental humming went the thought of freedom and the dream of the future — of California, of a farm. . . . One night, when his heart was overflowing with longing, he made these visionings a part of his monthly letter to Elsie. He wrote about the house he was dreaming of, a log cabin hidden by giant pine-trees, and of the excursions into the woods he and Robert would make to kill their meat, as most pioneers in California had done. But when he read the letter over he was ashamed and was in doubt about mailing it. It was a foolish letter, more fit for a boy than a man, a father of children. . . . However, he mailed it. Elsie would understand. . . . In her presence he always was a boy. And she had been in his thoughts so much lately, so much. . . .

Of course Elsie understood The letter brought a cheerfulness into her face that had not been there for many months. She was thankful that Fred was able to maintain his boy spirit in prison, that he was able to shed the radiance of dreams over sordid reality. . . .

As for Robert, he laid special claim to and appropriated the letter. He straightened out its folds and meant to keep it forever. . . . His father was nearer to him now than he had ever been — the boy spirit of the missive brought him nearer. The log cabin in California was an accomplished fact with the child. . . . He slept in it nights. . . . In a store window on the Bowery he had seen a rifle and he set his mind on it. . . . That was the rifle he was going to go hunting with, for he and his father would go hunting. They would have to, for they meant "to kill their meat" as all the pioneers had done. . . . He and his father — ah, what a life they were leading in Robert's dreams!

Robert used his father's letter to gain a point. Elsie, too, had been thinking of the future. Nightly, after she had completed her day's work, which was seldom before ten o'clock, she would go to the sink, wash her hands, face, and neck in cold water to banish sleep, and would sit down to work again for an hour, and work fast, as if she were just starting on a new day's work. It was this hour's work she was giving to the future. . . . Ruth, too, was beginning to contribute toward this family future. She had learned to make the artificial roses out of ribbon and the little knots and bows with which some of the more expensive boudoir caps were trimmed. And Elsie now ordered more of these caps — they paid better — and let Ruth relieve her of the delicate finger work which went into the making of these roses and bows. Ruth's labor, Elsie figured, was adding a dollar and a half a week to the family income. Robert, alone, was not contributing anything. His mother would not permit him to sell newspapers. She did not want him to roam about the streets at all times of day or night, she said. And now she also thwarted his plan to go along with the other boys of the district in search of wood, stray boxes and boards which could be picked up about the warehouses in the wholesale districts, and in this way cut the family coal bill. Fred's letter, however, had the effect of strengthening Robert's plea. His father was already considering him a sort of an equal. He talked of going out to kill game with his young son. Elsie relented. Henceforth Robert could go after wood — if he were careful.

These expeditions to the wholesale district set Robert aglow with happiness. They seemed to him like a foretaste of the hunting expeditions he and his father would make together "out there," as he was now speaking of California and the West.

Robert made these expeditions after school. One warm afternoon in March he returned from such a trip in half an hour. He had happened upon huge piles of boxes. He brought one load upon the little cart he had improvised for himself and was going again to clear up the rest. Elsie urged him to content himself with that one load, but Robert would not hear of it. He would be back in three quarters of an hour with another load. She watched the face and features of her son with a flood of happiness. Excitement was making him handsome; he seemed so brave. She gave in and let him go. Only he must keep his coat well buttoned. . . . But the day was altogether too summery for Robert to heed the warning. He returned with a second load of boxes and boards at six o'clock, tired. In spite of his exercise he did not have much of an appetite for supper and went to bed without her urging. During the night he awoke and asked for water. He was ill in the morning and at ten o'clock she called a doctor. He prescribed medicine, gave instructions, and said he would come again in the evening. He came. The child had pneumonia.

Elsie ran a race with death. For two weeks she did not undress, and took her sleep in snatches on the edge of the bed. Robert now lay in bed, while Ruth occupied the cot. The first week in April he was out of danger. Warm weather, the doctor said, would soon remove all fear of after-effects. She was afraid of after-effects. Nothing of the disease must remain lurking in her son. She was tireless in her attentions to the child. Just as the boy was becoming normal, she contracted a cold. It proved to be influenza. She did not call the doctor. She expected it would pass in a few days, and it did. Only her chest and bronchial tubes remained a trifle sensitive. She had not had enough covering. She was still giving all her best blankets to Robert,

leaving but a single cotton one for herself. She thought of buying an extra blanket, but April was three weeks gone. The warm weather ought to set in any day, she figured, and she did not feel like spending another three or four dollars on a quilt. She would not buy a cheap one; they were a waste of money. . . . But the warm weather lagged. May was cold, unusually so. It was not until the first week in June that summer weather set in in earnest.

Elsie was thankful. The cool weather had exasperated her. The sensitiveness in her bronchial tubes and chest persisted. She coughed and now and then was a little hoarse. The warm weather, she hoped, would knock it all out. And it did seem to be doing her good. But she was not getting rid of her pain entirely. In August she got another cold. It was more severe than the first, harder to get rid of. It dragged into September and then there was a spell of fall weather to aggravate it.

Gottfried noticed her cough one afternoon and looked Elsie over uneasily. He spoke reproachfully to her for not having seen a physician. It was not wise to let a cold persist so long. She promised him that she would see a doctor the next morning.

The physician listened to her chest for some moments, stopped and looked at her hard, glaringly. He listened again. Then he asked questions. Why had she not come sooner — *sooner?* For a moment the physician looked as if he were going to strike her. Elsie was alarmed. Was it anything bad?

Bad? Of course it was bad. There was no time to lose in mincing words. The doctor spoke bluntly — she had to know the truth if she were to save herself. Her lungs were affected, seriously affected. A sanitarium at once would be the very best thing. . . .

The blood left her cheeks and her hands were trembling. She stammered out her circumstances to the physician. She was the sole support of her children. Her husband would not be back before spring. A sanitarium was out of the question. She would have to be treated at home. . . . The doctor outlined a course of treatment for her and the care she was to take with the children. She must keep her distance from them if they were to be spared.

Gottfried ran in earlier than was his wont. He was anxious to hear what the physician had to say. What the doctor had said was written all over Elsie. Since the night before she seemed older by ten years. The doctor's words had stamped the consumptive look on her.

Gottfried was deep in thought for some moments and then — then he took charge of the house, of Elsie and the children. He, too, had been saving for Fred's future, their future, he informed his daughter-in-law. He had several hundred dollars in the bank with which he had meant to put Fred in business when he came out. Well, the future would have to take care of itself now. Henceforth she was not to work. She was to live on that money. She was not to worry. He would look after everything. His store was giving him far more than he needed. She must do exactly as the doctor had ordered. Things would find themselves. They would manage. . . . He took the prescriptions from her and hastily went to fill them. He was losing control over himself. . . . Poor Elsie, poor Fred! . . .

March winds were blowing. Spring was approaching, the spring Fred Conrad had looked forward to painfully, longingly, for two winters and a summer. He had thought that when he was within six — four weeks of his release from prison every moment of his day would be a song. . . . But

it was not. A somber, sinister look had come over him.

His friends — he had made several friends among the prisoners — ascribed Conrad's gloom to his worry over the future. The world was a pretty cold place for an ex-convict. Fred might have difficulty in getting on his feet again, they mused. But it was not this that was worrying him. It was a sudden and uncanny feeling that something had gone wrong at home, with his family. Since Christmas this feeling had been vaguely boring its way into his heart. There was something about Elsie's letters that was not reassuring, not entirely. They were nice, of course, but they did not seem so vigorous. Elsie's handwriting, too, had undergone certain changes. At times it was not at all like her writing. It seemed weak, uncertain, as if she might have found it hard to lift the pen. . . . Was it because she was tired — he was under the impression that every letter of hers was written in the evening — or was she sick?

His suspicions were confirmed in Elsie's final letter to him in prison. Within three weeks he would be out. There was no hiding things much longer from him. So she broke the news to him gently. She wrote that she had not been well a good part of the winter. Her chest was troubling her. Her lungs had not been as strong as they might. But she expected that she would get better now that spring was coming and he would be home once more. . . .

Fred was thunderstruck. The lack of firmness in her handwriting was unmistakable. He gazed at the letter and knew that it had cost his wife great effort. Elsie was ill, broken by fate, by him. The Elsie of the letter was not the Elsie he had known, that he had left a year and a half ago. Her spirit was gone; her flesh was wasting. . . . He went about in a daze and did his work mechanically. He ceased reading, dreaming. . . . He was conscious of only one de-

sire — to be home, among his own, once more, to face whatever had come upon them. . . .

He wrote one last letter. It was brief. He would communicate again with them when he was outside the prison walls. . . .

The telegram from Fred came at six o'clock in the evening. He was telegraphing from the railway station, a free man. He was starting for home that night and would arrive in New York early on the second morning. . . . Elsie did not sleep a wink that night. She wept. In the morning they had to have the doctor. He forbade all excitement and gave her something to put her to sleep. But she was up again in the afternoon. As evening approached she became restless. She talked as if she were in a dream. Ruth became frightened and sent Robert to call their grandfather. Gottfried came and sent for the doctor at once. But before the physician arrived, Elsie had a hemorrhage. A nurse was necessary. Elsie could not be left alone a moment. . . .

Fred stepped off the train and looked about. He had still hoped that Elsie would be there to meet him. He had been looking forward to that meeting since they had parted in the Red Bank jail. With all his gloomy forebodings he was unable to conceive that Elsie might be fatally ill — lost to him. So he gazed about, thinking that perhaps she might have been looking for him a car or two ahead. . . . Then he saw the gaunt form of his father searching for him in the crowd. Ruth was at the old man's side.

Fred made no motion to grasp his father's extended hands. He gazed at them speechless, horrified.

"She is living, Papa!" Ruth burst into tears as she perceived her father's terrified eyes. "She is just a little sick

this morning. But the doctor said she would soon be all right. Robert is home with her. . . ."

Fred grabbed his daughter and held her in his arms. . . . She was just like Elsie — the child. She understood his questions before he asked them.

In the car father and son were absorbed in earnest conversation. It was a sad welcome for his son, but the thing could not be hidden any longer and it was best to prepare Fred. So Gottfried spoke to his son without looking at him. . . . He told him the whole truth.

Ruth pointed out to her father, who was holding her hand, the house they lived in. She ran into the hall and up the stairs ahead of them. . . . Elsie heard their footsteps and made an effort to rise. But the nurse remonstrated with her and gently put her head back on the pillow. . . . As the nurse stepped aside Elsie saw her husband standing in the middle of the room. . . . She summoned all her strength and stretched her hands out to him. . . . But Fred made no move. He could not see for tears. . . .

BOOK III

RUTH CONRAD

CHAPTER XVIII

WITH THE EYES OF YOUTH

ELSIE lingered for fifteen months. For some time she was at a hospital, but when the end was nearing she begged to be taken home. She wanted to be near her children, near Fred. . . . The children worried her. What would become of them? She would soon be lost to them, and Fred. . . . As she watched her husband with her fevered eyes it seemed to her that the children were already fatherless. . . . Fred was so changed; he was no longer himself. . . .

Shortly upon his return home Fred had found work in one of the large bakeries. Nearly a thousand men were employed in the bread factory and few if any of them belonged to the union. No one there had the slightest notion who Conrad might be, nor cared. The work was done on a strict factory basis. Men went to their benches with the whistle and quit with the whistle. There was no talking during working hours, no passing of jokes, as was the case in the small bakeries where only half a dozen or so men were employed and a new man was known from the start. A man could lose himself easily here. It was a splendid place for self-effacement and that was precisely what Fred in his broken mood wanted.

The dream of California, of a farm there, of going far away from New York, from the men and places he had known, had remained fixed with him throughout his impris-

onment. Even Elsie's letter telling him of her sickness could not down this dream. On the contrary, now more than ever California was the place for him. He read in the prison library stories of men broken in health, men with their lungs eaten away, who had found a new lease on life in the high altitudes of California mountains. That was the very place for Elsie. . . . He had meant to spend only a week or less at home and then he would start for the West. . . . But the dream was shattered. Elsie's life was ebbing. . . .

Outwardly Fred Conrad was seemingly normal. Prison had aged him rapidly, but that apparently was all. Inwardly however he was changed. His mind lost much of its mobility. There was a fixed gaze in his eyes. He was trying to be sensitive and considerate, but this immobility got the best of him every time. His talk was as remote as his gaze. He always seemed as if he had something on his mind, something troublesome; that he was about to reach a momentous decision. Men just before they decide to commit suicide often talk and act that way. And Gottfried for some time was apprehensive of his son. He inquired after Fred's going and coming from Robert, his alarm not always successfully concealed. . . .

In time Gottfried became accustomed to Fred's apathetic ways. There was no occasion to fear suicide — it was not that bad. Fred's spirit was broken, but his mind was not unbalanced. Such things frequently happened. Gottfried had himself known such cases. Only men of extraordinary character could throw off the effect of imprisonment lightly. Most men were shaken loose by it. The thing was entirely mental, spiritual, and life was the only physician, time the only cure. Time, he hoped, would bring Fred around to normal again.

Late one night Gottfried was sitting at Elsie's bedside.

He came in every evening after closing his store. The children were sleeping. Fred was not home; he was working nights and would not return before six in the morning. Gottfried made some fresh tea, helped Elsie prop herself up in bed and gave it to her. He asked after Fred; he had not seen him that day. She answered in a feeble voice. . . . Suddenly she gave Gottfried back the half full cup and lay down. She was weeping. Gottfried was gazing through the open window at the tenement across the street. . . . He had no heart to take from his daughter-in-law the relief which tears brought her. . . . Words of cheer were so meaningless now. She was dying and she knew it. It was a question of weeks, perhaps only days. . . .

Her voice was so low that it was several moments before Gottfried became aware that Elsie was speaking to him. He leaned over close to her.

She was speaking about the children. They were still so young — and Fred was in such a bad way himself — They would need looking after — and she was so alone — She had no sisters — And her brother she had not seen in years — Gottfried would have to look after the children — He was the only one — It would be hard for him, but he would have to do it — for Fred was so — so —

But — And slowly, every move costing her great effort, she brought her face close to Gottfried's and looked into his eyes, as if trying to give emphasis with her gaze to the words which her tongue was uttering feebly. But — he would have to look after the children with the eyes of youth — with the eyes of youth — She repeated the phrase. . . . She wanted a sign of recognition from her father-in-law, a sign that he understood her — understood what she meant — with the eyes of youth — She sank back exhausted, moaning —

Gottfried bent over still nearer, took her frail bony hand in his and stroked it . ntly. Big tears fell from his eyes.

Elsie's death seemed to have thawed Fred back to life. He was looking after the children more. Upon returning from work in the morning he would help Ruth with her work — the girl had left school and was keeping house for him. He supervised Robert's breakfast and would not go to sleep until after the boy had left with his school books. He had the flat whitewashed and began to put his neglected household in order once more. . . .

Gottfried observed these things with relief. He was hoping that the crisis in Fred's life was passed, that his son would pull himself together once more. Gently, without undue intrusion, he was trying to veer Fred around to a proper sense of his new duties. It was part of his faithfulness to Elsie's memory, Gottfried was saying, for Fred to hold his ground. . . . The children needed care. He must make up to Ruth and Robert for their great loss. . . . Fred must be both father and mother to them now. . . . He must not let grief sweep over him, and inundate his sense of duty.

The years of Fred's imprisonment and of Elsie's illness had weighed heavily upon Gottfried. He was tired. During these trying years he had been robbed of many a night's sleep. Many were the days he went breakfastless. Frequently sudden grief would cause him to forget his supper. . . . He was yearning for a rest and was glad to see his son returning to normal again. . . . He could relax a bit. . . .

It was the reaction from the years of watchfulness and worry that lulled Gottfried into a sense of too great security; for Fred's interest in the house began to wane in a short time and the whole burden of it fell upon Ruth's shoulders. The girl struggled bravely with it. . . . She never com-

plained, never crossed her father with a word. . . . She was looking at him with the eyes her mother set into her. Her father had been wronged by life. He had been imprisoned, martyred. It was up to her mother, when she was living, and to Ruth now, to assuage her father's suffering as much as possible. . . . When Gottfried came he found everything in the house in seeming order. Ruth had not a word to say to her grandfather about her father's neglect, about his slipping back into the state of chronic brooding which characterized him during her mother's illness. Gottfried's optimism about the state of affairs in his son's household grew perceptibly. The awakening was terrible when it came.

The trouble began with Robert. He had become negligent in his school work. In the latter part of February the teacher wrote a letter of complaint to the boy's father. But Fred never saw the letter. Robert, who expected such a letter, had lain in wait for the postman and upon securing the missive tore it up. A few days before Easter another letter came. The charges against Robert were more serious. He was unruly and had absented himself from school altogether too frequently. He brought excuses, to be sure, but these frequent absences were endangering his chances for advancement. Ruth read the letter, talked it over with Robert. Both were terrified and decided to hide the matter from their father.

But it was weighing on Ruth's mind. Her nerves were on edge from the winter's drudgery. She had no decent clothes and her appearance as well as Robert's was sadly neglected. Frequently at night, when her father was at work and Robert was sleeping, she would lie awake and cry over their difficult lot. Why was Mother taken from them so early? Why was Father so strange in his actions? Why was Robert always in trouble with his teachers? Why —

Spring came unusually early that year. The last part of April summer was in the street. Ruth could not stand staying in the house at night alone, brooding. She would wait until Robert was asleep and then would steal out of the house into the street below and sit until midnight and sometimes until daybreak, so that Fred would have difficulty in waking her in the morning when he returned from his night's work.

Across the street from the Conrads lived a Mrs. Shannon, a widow, with a half dozen children to support. Mrs. Shannon's oldest son, Danny, a year older than Ruth, worked as a messenger boy during the day. Mrs. Shannon herself would leave home at five in the afternoon and would not return before two in the morning. She was scrubbing offices in the business district. Danny Shannon, after putting his younger brothers and sisters to sleep, would go down into the street and loaf around the block, or sit on a garbage can and smoke a cigarette and dream. He observed Ruth sitting alone several nights. She saw him taking care of his younger brothers. They were neighbors and they soon became friends and would sit up together. Danny said he was waiting for his mother, but he always managed to slip into the house just a few minutes before Mrs. Shannon's return.

In the course of his work as a messenger boy, Danny would pick up a few nickels every day in tips. Mrs. Shannon was always on the lookout for these nickels, but the boy managed to divert one or two from time to time. He would buy fruit or candy with it and he and Ruth would share it long after the street was asleep. . . .

Ruth's ardor for the house was gone. There were more letters from school about Robert. But no one paid attention to letters now — it was too fearful a subject to broach. Ruth and Robert both waited for the worst with stolid fatalism.

. . . The teacher called on the Conrad home. She called around six o'clock and no one was in. There were more calls, investigations. Agents of the Juvenile Society were making inquiries among the neighbors. The plight of the Conrad household traveled from tongue to tongue. It reached Gottfried's ears and struck him like a knife. . . . His promise to Elsie. . . . He was to look after the children. . . . Instead he had been indulging in rest and sleep. . . . He hardly knew where he was that afternoon and evening. A little before nine he could not keep himself back any longer. He closed the store and started almost at a run for Fred's house to have a look at Ruth and Robert. He was too late. The agents of the Juvenile Society had been there ahead of him and had gathered them in. . . .

The case as presented to the court by the Juvenile Society looked sinister enough. It was an appalling record of neglect that the household of Fred Conrad presented. The father was working nights. The boy and the girl, both of adolescent age, when the vigilant eye of parents is absolutely essential, were left alone with every facility for wrongdoing. And mischief there was a-plenty. Robert's record in school was a sufficient indictment. But bad as the record was it was a marvel that it was not worse. For, after all, it was a record of mischief only. The Juvenile Society gladly gave the boy credit for that. The wonder was that with every opportunity for it the boy had not actually drifted into crime. . . .

Upon Ruth the officers looked with greater concern. She was older than Robert. She was sixteen, or near it. In many ways she was still a child, but in many other ways she might be looked upon as a woman. The agents would not make any rash accusations against her — it was not policy

with the society to be reckless in the use of language against a girl of such tender age, and a first offender. They intended to be charitable, very charitable. But then, Danny Shannon, the boy with whom she had been roaming nights, was a messenger boy, "a boy about town," and was known to be too sophisticated for an innocent young girl to be friendly with. Besides — there came whispered testimony by one of the society's agents. He had trailed the children one night and had found Ruth sitting with Danny, her head in his lap, sleeping. . . . Serving as a sinister background in the written record of the case was Fred Conrad's term in the penitentiary. . . .

Fred Conrad was called to the witness stand. From the day his children had been taken from him two months had elapsed. They had been terrible months. Day in and day out he dragged himself from one branch of the society to the next, from one official to another in search of his children, pleading in vain for their restoration. He begged, made promises, but his pleas were ignored. And now his children were there in open court. His woes had been dragged out before the eyes of the world. The agents of the Juvenile Society were laying bare his most intimate life with utter unconcern. The only thing that seemed to interest them was to justify their interference in his family affairs before the Judge.

Hardly had his interrogator finished framing his question when Fred Conrad went to pieces. He had lost all control over his feelings. He hissed and gesticulated. He assailed, denounced, threatened. . . . It was injustice, the rankest cruelty. . . . The Juvenile Society was tyrannous. Its agents were insincere, prying busybodies! They were outraging all human decencies. They were turning the law into

an instrument of torture. . . . They were barbarous inquisitors. . . .

The investigators of the Juvenile Society smiled frigidly at these remarks of the irate father. The Judge — Smiley was his name — listened to Fred with an air that seemed just the least bit bored. He was accustomed to such outbursts by angry parents. Fred Conrad had convicted himself. The case was closed. The Judge reserved decision. Ruth and Robert were taken back to the detention-room for the present, while Fred looked on helplessly. . . .

Gottfried had listened to Fred's incoherent speech with bowed head. His son had not had a good night's sleep in these two months. It was inevitable that he should go to pieces as he did. But the children must not be made to suffer for the shattered state of their father's nerves. The Judge must know something of his son's life, of his suffering. He would go to the Judge himself. He would lay the matter before him in the right light. The Judge was human, all men were. He would be susceptible to pity. . . .

Judge Smiley was a young man not more than thirty-five. He was put in charge of the Juvenile court because of his reform tendencies. He was looked upon in certain quarters even as a sort of socialist. . . . When Gottfried Conrad was shown into his chambers he half rose. The tragic dignity with which the tall white-haired man carried himself lifted him out of his seat.

Gottfried apologized for his son's outbreak. He was not attempting to excuse it but to explain it. Fred Conrad had suffered a great deal since the death of his wife and prior to her death. He was a sick man. It was not really his son but he, Gottfried Conrad, who was to blame for the condition Ruth and Robert were in. *He* had neglected them and he had no business to neglect them. However, if the court

would entrust Ruth and Robert to him, would award him the custody of his grandchildren, he would take the very best care of them in the future. His means were sufficient. His store was giving him a livelihood.

Judge Smiley looked at him. He was greatly moved by the man's speech, by the innate nobility of his manner. But Gottfried was old, he was past sixty. The jurist studied the papers in the case for some moments and fell to thinking.

"I see," he addressed himself to Gottfried finally, "that your wife is not living. And you reside back of the store. It is a business place you would bring the children into, and with no woman to look after them. I am afraid it is no place for your granddaughter. About the boy it is different. I should have no hesitancy whatever about giving you the boy. But the girl, at Ruth's age — it is a delicate matter. . . ."

Gottfried began speaking about Ruth. He knew the child, had helped raise her. He could vouch for her. She had had a splendid mother. In all the testimony of the agents for the Juvenile Society nothing vitally derogatory to the girl's character had been disclosed. The child in her loneliness had accepted the company of a lad as lonely as herself. She was found sitting beside the boy at midnight, tired asleep, her head against his breast, on his lap. . . . It was more pitiful than criminal. . . .

Judge Smiley agreed with Gottfried as to the pitifulness of the case. It was far from his mind to condemn Ruth. But the problem was to safeguard the girl in the future — that was his chief concern, that was what the Juvenile court was there for. Now, his son's home beyond all question was no place for the girl. And he, Gottfried Conrad was an old man. A girl at Ruth's age is a problem in a city like New York even when she has a mother. She is doubly so when

the mother is dead and the father's state is such as in this case. . . .

The Judge was pondering, and Gottfried was silent, waiting.

"Is there any church or denomination your granddaughter or her mother adhered to?" The Judge turned upon Conrad suddenly.

Gottfried felt a warmth rise to his face. A weak protest died in the fragment of an instant. He recalled Fred's wedding — the Episcopal minister.

"Episcopalian," he said faintly.

The Judge brightened instantly. Episcopalian! That was very fortunate. He would not send Ruth to an institution — that would be out of all proportion to her offense. There was an Episcopalian home — the Home of Redemption — just the place for cases such as Ruth. Of course the Home of Redemption may be full up just now. But he would call Sister Agatha on the telephone personally and would see to it that she made a place for Ruth. He would give the girl an indeterminate sentence. As soon as conditions at home improved she would be permitted to return without delay. It was a very fortunate outcome. . . .

To Gottfried the outcome was far from fortunate. In fact so depressed was he by it that he had almost got home before he recalled that the Judge had given him an order which was to free his grandson. He fumbled in his pocket and found the envelope with the order in it. He took the car back to the Juvenile Society. In a few minutes he had Robert in his custody. The boy was greatly frightened and was heartbroken over his parting from his sister. . . .

CHAPTER XIX

THE SONG OF THE FLESH

TWO years had passed. It was Ruth's birthday — she was eighteen years old — and Fred Conrad obtained permission from Sister Agatha, the superintendent of the Home of Redemption, to spend an hour with his daughter. Sister Agatha was averse to the slightest infraction of the institution's discipline, but she granted Fred Conrad permission to see his daughter that morning right gladly. Ruth was convalescing from a week's illness, and the superintendent knew from experience that nothing restored a girl more quickly than a visit from a relative. The strain of confinement and the dreariness of seclusion were at the bottom of many of the ailments to which the girls succumbed periodically, and these yielded to nothing so readily as to a familiar voice, a loved face. The girls were always more agreeable after a visit from a relative or friend.

Fred and his daughter were alone in the big dormitory that April morning; Ruth was the only patient that day. The hospital room had the choicest location in the entire building; it overlooked the Hudson. Father and daughter stood for some time in front of the grated window, observing the silvery waves on the water, listening to the hiss and tear of a fast motor-boat and to the more ponderous noises of a steamer. Fred gazed on the water and on the craggy shore of New Jersey sadly. . . . Poor Ruth! How tantalizing it was to be so near these things, so near freedom, and yet to

be a prisoner. His position was equally humiliating. It was maddening to think that he had to accept his daughter's imprisonment helplessly. . . . He, her father, could do nothing for her, had no say over her. . . . Permission to see her that morning was a privilege for which he was expected to be thankful. She was in the hands of the law; the law took her from him. . . . What a terrible law — to take a daughter from a father!

Ruth, on her part, was observing her father. It did not escape her how bad he looked. He was going down fast. The hair about his temples was all white and only the last time he had visited her it was still gray. There was no strength about him physically, and mentally things were worse. She wanted to talk to him about the future, her future, their future. She should be leaving the institution soon now. . . . But she refrained from speaking about this. Her father looked so weak; she did not wish to tax him with further troublesome thoughts. They would talk these things over some other time, perhaps when he and her grandfather came to visit her together. . . .

Fred gazed at his daughter and was both happy and embarrassed. . . . Ruth, his little Ruth, was a woman now; she was eighteen years old. If Elsie could but see her! Elsie — Ah, yes! If Elsie had lived they would not be sitting there in that room with grated windows. He stared at the bars in front of him with a peculiarly reminiscent look. He was trying to think of something, recall something. . . . Ah, yes, he had it. . . . It was that night in prison — the night when he nearly went mad, because he could not rid himself of the vision of his son Robert in prison stripes, Robert behind prison bars. Ah, he remembered that night. . . . But it was Ruth, not Robert, who was destined to feel life's iron hand. . . . He had wept for the wrong child. . . .

The hour was nearly up and Ruth began speaking to her father hastily. Always at the last moment she had a thousand questions ready. And she would think of many others after he had gone. She clung to his arm in these last moments tenderly, pathetically. . . .

There was no mirror in the ward and Ruth studied her arms, her limbs, her form, separately, and then tried to compose a picture of herself in her mind. . . . She was pleased with the imaginary picture; she was handsome. She felt strength coming to her, shooting upward through her limbs. Her skin was abloom. Life was confiding its secrets to her; it was whispering hope. All trials end — her prison term, too, would end and freedom would be hers once more. The world would be before her. . . .

She gathered up her gingham dress of faded blue — the regulation garb of the institution — and surveyed her hips. They were shapely, magnificent. . . . She studied her bust. Through the sack-like waist her breasts were clearly outlined. She watched their rhythmic rise and fall for some moments and blushed with satisfaction. . . . She was a woman grown — she was eighteen. . . . There was jubilee in her brain. Her body was making its début to the world. Her blood was singing a pæan to the flesh. . . .

The spell of the day was on her — she dreamed dreams. There was a lonely rocker in the hospital room. She moved it to the window and sat down. She undid her hair and let the wind play with her tresses. Wonderful tresses they were — long and soft, of lustrous brown. . . . Her mother had always been so fond of her hair, had taken such care of it. . . . Poor Mother! She thought of that little mound in the cemetery. . . . She had not been there for so long, so long. . . . A tear ran down her cheeks; others followed, but she made

no effort to wipe them. It was sweet to lean back in the chair and long and dream and let the tears soothe her pain. . . .

A faint sigh coming from some one near her broke the spell. Sister Agatha was standing in the room with another woman, a visitor. Ruth arose and remained standing. In Sister Agatha's presence the girls were at attention. In her surprise at not having heard the superintendent and visitor enter, Ruth forgot her tears.

"What makes you so sad, child?" the visitor asked, coming up close to the girl. Ruth studied the stranger as carefully as the latter studied her. The woman's voice was soft, as if from suffering. Ruth's own voice sounded that way at times, and she wondered what the cause of the other's sadness might be.

"You have been crying," the visitor continued. "Why have you been crying?"

"It is my birthday," Ruth blurted out. The thought had been uppermost in her mind and she spoke it.

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen."

"May I ask your name?" The woman spoke apologetically as if she feared that she was becoming too inquisitive, too personal. But Ruth answered gladly. She liked the woman, liked her for her unhappy eyes. It was unusual — an unhappy look in a woman so beautifully gowned, so rich. Sister Agatha never brought visitors to the institution unless they were very wealthy.

"Ruth Conrad," she replied. "Ruth, my name is."

"Ruth!" the visitor exclaimed, and her eyes filled. "Ruth — it is such a nice name. My sister was called Ruth. She was just a year older than you. She died last winter. She was thrown from a horse and killed.

"May I come to see you again?" the woman said as she extended her hand to Ruth in farewell.

Ruth looked embarrassed. The visitor's conduct was so unusual. Most women visitors made a spectacle of the girls in the institution, looked upon them as an experiment. She detested these women, detested them and their riches. But this woman was different.

It was not for Ruth, however, to say whether the visitor could call again or not. She looked in embarrassment to Sister Agatha. The superintendent gently piloted the visitor out of the room.

The following afternoon a carriage drove up and Mrs. Avery's maid — that was the visitor's name — gave the superintendent a parcel for "Miss Conrad." Sister Agatha in person took the package to Ruth. It was a birthday present from Mrs. Avery, a beautiful hair brush and several other toilet articles. . . . It seemed to Ruth that the superintendent's attitude toward her was changed; there was a deference in it. And Ruth was right. Sister Agatha had had much experience with people. She had watched Mrs. Avery as the latter was talking to Ruth and immediately sensed that the society woman's interest in the girl was likely to prove more than a transient fancy. Something would come out of it. Ruth might not have been born with a spoon in her mouth, but her birthday had been a lucky one for her. . . .

Few girls at the Home of Redemption stayed there as long as Ruth had. It was policy with the institution to return a girl to her parents after the lapse of a year or so, when it was thought that the girl, or her parents — or both — had reformed sufficiently for the family to be reunited. Where a girl had no home to return to, or where the home appeared

unsuitable to the institution's investigators and officials, a new "home" was found for her. Finding a home for a girl usually meant turning her over to some family outside of New York City, and preferably outside of the state, to become a servant.

As there was no visible improvement in Fred Conrad's health and affairs Sister Agatha repeatedly had tried to place Ruth in such a "home," but the girl fought it off every time. She would rather serve the maximum term the law could hold her to — three years — and then be returned to her family than gain freedom through exile from her people. Fred sided with his daughter in this view, and though Sister Agatha took great pains to make it clear to Conrad that he had no say whatever in the matter, that his daughter was a ward of the institution and entirely within the hand of the law, nevertheless the father's protest was not without moral effect. Ruth stayed on at the Home awaiting the day when the law would relinquish its grip on her.

When, after several visits and talks with Ruth, Mrs. Avery expressed to Sister Agatha her wish to take Ruth under her roof, to give the girl a home, and asked the latter's advice, the superintendent viewed the matter very sympathetically. Sister Agatha had come to have quite a regard for the girl. Ruth was a model inmate and was of a finer character than most of the other girls in the place. There was no question that she would make good. Mrs. Avery would be well served, Ruth would be given a splendid start and the institution could be benefited. . . . The credit for Ruth's fine behavior could, to a degree at least, be transferred to the Home of Redemption, to the training, counsel, friendship the girl had received there. . . . Sister Agatha, in her mind, already saw large donations to the institution

from Mrs. Avery and her friends, and perhaps even a legacy. And legacies were what the institution needed. They were its principal support.

To Ruth the offer of a home with Mrs. Avery seemed like a dream — and that was why she asked time to think it over. Young though she was, life had already played havoc with her dreams and she was mistrustful. She wanted to consult with her father — and with her grandfather. When Sister Agatha saw what was troubling Ruth, she modified Mrs. Avery's offer. She eliminated the fairy aspect of it and made it appear more of a business transaction. What Mrs. Avery wanted was a lady's maid. Good maids were hard to get; the best of them were obtained by training only, and Mrs. Avery meant to train Ruth for the job. That put a different complexion on the matter.

Gottfried recoiled when the proposition to have Ruth go to work in a rich home was laid before him. The thought was abhorrent to him. He had a dislike for personal service of any kind. It was undemocratic. In an ideal society there would be no domestics. For Ruth to become the servant of a rich family was especially humiliating. He was coming to have such a high regard for her. It was not only the girl's suffering that endeared her to him. He was coming to see a likeness, a link between himself and his granddaughter. It seemed to him that Ruth was temperamentally nearer to him than either his son or grandson, though he had no complaint to make of Robert; the boy was growing up firmly under his grandfather's watchful eyes. But the girl was of sterner stuff. He had faith in Ruth, faith in her ability to meet a situation. She would bear up under difficulties much better than her father. She would not break. Fred's inability to pull himself together was gall and wormwood to the old man. He was brooding over it constantly.

It was this faith in the girl, however, that in the end prevented Gottfried from expressing himself strongly against the girl's proposed entry into the Avery home. After all, it was Ruth who was imprisoned — for the institution life by whatever name it might be called was imprisonment; she had been imprisoned for two years. The girl's inherent strength, he hoped, would save her from going to extremes, from becoming either servile or snobbish. Freedom was the most precious thing in life. It was especially precious to a girl of eighteen. Ruth might save a whole year by accepting the Avery offer. Gottfried was silent.

Fred urged his daughter to accept the offer. It would give her her freedom at once and would not take her away from New York, from him. Yes, it might even lead to a future. Connections were everything in this world, and his influence was nil.

The great tragedy in Mrs. Avery's life was the fact that she had no children — would never have any, though she had not passed the age when women normally do have children. Her husband, William Orcutt Avery, was the president of a Western railroad. He was director and vice-president in a dozen or more mining and manufacturing corporations, all of which were located west of Denver. Money was literally flowing to him faster than he could keep track of it, but the more he accumulated the less time he had for his home and his wife.

In the early years of their married life, when Mr. Avery was the vice-president of a New York bank and before he had gone into the railroad business, Mrs. Avery was rather glad that children had not come. They needed to entrench themselves socially and it was a great help to be unencumbered. It was when her husband had left the bank for the

wider field of building and running railroads, when their social position was assured, that she began to think about having a child. She consulted a physician. He advised her to take extra care of her health. She must begin building up her body, making it fit and inviting for motherhood. Mrs. Avery became engrossed in the study of proper living. She discarded the corset and followed fads in food and dress. Five years passed in such preparations. She became impatient and sought out a specialist. He held out no hope; she would never be a mother. She might as well make up her mind to it and spare herself unnecessary pain.

That was nearly ten years back, but she had never recovered from the blow. Society had lost its charm. It had, in fact, become irksome to her and she quickly transferred her interest to social service, which was then in the ascendancy and to which many rich women were turning their attention. She contributed generously to the building of a settlement house in one of the poorer districts, helped finance the Young Women's Christian Association, became a sustaining member in several clubs which aimed to help the struggling children of the slums, and lately had been taking an interest in unfortunate young women and girls who had "fallen by the way." She visited the various institutions which she helped support, and tried to give "something of herself," as she expressed it, to the poor. It was almost second nature with her to be democratic, yes, even apologetic to the poor with whom she came in contact, as if she felt herself at least partly responsible for their condition. It was this innate humility of hers that made Mrs. Avery a welcome visitor at every institution. The unfortunates she talked to felt no resentment against her.

At the death of her mother some four years previous — her father had died long ago — Mrs. Avery had transferred all

her unused motherly affections to her family — Edward Sumner Channing, a brother and her sister Ruth, both of them considerably younger than herself. Edward had married two years back and only the previous winter her only sister met with a tragic death. She went out riding in Central Park one afternoon. An hour later she was brought home with a broken neck.

With the death of her sister, Mrs. Avery was thrown once more upon herself for company, interest, consolation. Her husband was more than ever away from home. Mr. Avery often complained that he was like the man who had "caught" a bear. When asked why he was not coming, he explained that the bear was holding him. Mr. Avery, too, was held — in the grip of business pressure. Though he could well afford to take a rest, business would not permit it. Time and again he had made plans for a trip around the world, but always the right man upon whom he could shoulder his work and duties either could not be found or was not available just then, and the plans had to be abandoned. Mr. Avery continued to spend his nights in Pullman compartments or hotels and his days in conferences, giving orders, signing contracts — and his wife became lonelier than ever. Her sister's death had thrown her off the beaten track completely. The house was abhorrent to her. She tried to escape from herself. She made frequent trips to the slums, talked to poor people, listened to their sorrows and tragedies, and by comparison her pain was often stilled. . . .

But these excursions into the nests of misery and suffering could not make her forget entirely. The house was lonely. She missed a human voice, familiar footsteps. She hated dogs. She considered it a travesty to make a pet of an animal when so many children were drying up for the want of a caress. She thought for a time of adopting a child,

but could not bring herself to make some one else's child her own. She could not love it as she would her own. If she could only adopt some one's company, some one's friendship, sympathy, without adopting the person itself! She had been thinking of these things when she came upon Ruth in the hospital ward of the Home of Redemption. The girl's face, the tears not intended for a stranger's eye which ran down her cheek, and her name — the name her dead sister had borne — accentuated the longing for a person in the house, a person who would banish that awful stillness there. Ruth was the very person. There was such a softness about her eyes. She was so different from any of the other girls. And she was good to look at, presentable. She wouldn't be out of place anywhere. Mrs. Avery would make a friend of her, a real friend. However, Sister Agatha was right; there was no harm in using caution. It might be well not to tell the girl the whole truth. She would ask Ruth to come to her as a maid, as Sister Agatha urged. She would lift the barrier between them gradually. . . .

Margaret Channing — Mrs. Avery's maiden name — came from a family that had figured strongly in the Abolitionist cause. There were legends in the family about Edward Sumner Channing, her grandfather, who had had a hand in the escape of many a negro slave and whose money had financed many an Abolitionist publication. Mrs. Avery, as a child, had listened to these stories about her grandfather with a fond pride. It had been her hope to tell them to her own children. This was not to be, but the memory of her Abolitionist grandfather urged her on to many an act of kindness toward her fellow men.

Her brother, Edward Sumner Channing, was named after the grandfather and with the name the boy seemed to have inherited his grandfather's love of freedom, as well as of

adventure. Young Channing had been brought up in affluence — his grandfather had amassed a great deal of property which yielded the family a large income. He was sent to Yale and, as he was not fond of athletics, his love of freedom and adventure passed over into a vague, restless moodiness which he could not always explain to himself. At times he deplored the age he was living in. His grandfather had been more fortunate; there were slavery and a civil war in his day. There was work for a man to do, a wrong to right, while in his own day everything was small, warped. Men either gave vent to their passions by going after gold, or else learned to deaden their yearnings with whiskey. . . . Into this latter class young Channing had fallen as a student. An interest in socialism, which was just then prominently asserting itself among a certain class of wealthy Americans, was awakened in him by his sister's ramblings among the poor. But it was soon overshadowed by another interest — a girl. Being of a tempestuous nature, his love for the girl — the daughter of a banker, an associate of Mrs. Avery's husband — was extremely passionate. In six months he and Emmeline French, one of the season's debutantes, were married. But they did not "live happy ever after" and Channing was turning more and more to his sister for advice and sympathy in his unhappy union. . . .

He had heard of his sister's "adventure," as he called it, with Ruth Conrad, but he had been out of town at the time and it was not until Ruth had been at the Avery home for nearly a month that Channing saw her. He drove up one afternoon. Mrs. Avery was in her boudoir and Ruth was alone in the music-room. Channing extended his hand cordially.

"You're little sister, aren't you?" he asked.

"I am Ruth," she replied, embarrassed. But he would

not let her explain further. He chattered away carelessly about his affairs, his prolonged absence from the city, as if she had been a member of the family. As he talked he observed the girl with a well-concealed amazement. Ruth exceeded even the glowing description Mrs. Avery had given of her. There was a grace of carriage in her that many a girl born to the home and society in which Ruth had lived but a month could not show.

"She's a thoroughbred, all right," he mused as he studied her. What a wonderful figure! And her hair — he had never seen its equal. She radiated health and restfulness. There was nothing nervous about her. It was evident that she would not go into hysterics over trifles. She had a sound mind in a sound body. It was thus he had always pictured to himself the ideal woman — calm, self-possessed, strong, a Venus who had no frazzled nerves and whose moods were as healthy as her body. She seemed thoughtful beyond her age, and while she was not shrinking, and seemed to have set the proper value upon herself, she was considerate. She was like a mother respecting the privacies of her son, like a sister keeping the proper distance from her grown brother.

"By Jove!" Channing exclaimed, and swallowed the rest of his thoughts. They were rather confused thoughts, reflecting upon many things, denting many an ironclad conventionality. . . .

"Oh, you know each other already," Mrs. Avery said as she entered the room. She was pleased at her brother's cordiality to Ruth, at the utter lack of superiority in his conduct toward the girl. It was just what she might expect from Edward. He was such a democrat — and she was proud of his democracy.

As his sister came in, Channing's face clouded.

"More trouble?" she asked uneasily.

"Yep, same old trouble." He tried to be careless. But in the next instant his feeling got the better of him. It was impossible — he and Emmeline would never get along. They could never agree. There was no common ground between them.

Mrs. Avery pretended to be angry with him, with both of them. They were acting like children. They *were* children, that was what was the matter with them. It was time they became sensible and stopped scrapping and quarreling over nothing.

"Now, sister, you know you don't mean all you say," retorted Channing. "You know Emmeline and I can't get along. What is the use of playing the same old game. You are not deceiving me and you know you are not deceiving yourself. You know Emmeline as well as I do. You know her constitution, you know her temper, her nerves."

"There you are!" cried Mrs. Avery in despair. "That's what comes of marrying a season's debutante!"

Ruth was uncomfortable. She felt that she was out of place at this airing of family troubles and started to leave the room, but Channing called her back.

"It's no secret," he said. "Everybody knows that Emmeline and I don't get along. You will hear of it every time I come here; you can't escape it." He said these last words with a bitter laugh. But he turned the conversation to more agreeable subjects.

Channing was a frequent visitor at his sister's. There was an office on Fifth Avenue whose glass door bore his name as the head of the Channing Estate, but his presence in or absence from that office made little difference. The business of the Channing Estate was carefully and properly transacted by its trustees and agents. And into any corporation business which would require his active participation,

Channing steadfastly refused to be inveigled. In part his refusal to go into business was to be accounted for by his general disposition, which did not incline him to amass money. In part, however, it was due to the fact that it was his father-in-law who was most insistent in his attempts to get Channing connected with a bank or corporation. Channing disliked his father-in-law and took malicious pleasure in turning down every one of the old man's carefully worked out plans.

With boyish glee he would narrate how he was sidestepping his father-in-law's plans to tie him to an office and the latter's discomfiture at finding that the bird had flown. He visited his sister almost daily, and her brother's increasing troubles now supplied Mrs. Avery with a fresh fund of worries. She was talking to Ruth constantly about Sumner's — they always called him by his middle name — marital troubles, blaming society for the way it brought up girls in frivolity, without a thought for the serious things of life. Mrs. Channing she called a spoiled child, a girl of a season. Emmeline had ruined her brother's life. The boy was becoming too unsettled to do anything, to concentrate on anything.

Ruth listened to Mrs. Avery's plaints and at first they only evoked in her general reflections on life. She, the other girls in the Home of Redemption, had always thought that the poor alone are not happy. Mrs. Avery's sad face taught her that the rich too may have their troubles. And now she was learning more and more of these troubles. Happiness, apparently, was a capricious bird and insisted on building its nest wherever it pleased its fancy. . . . Her ideas about many things were undergoing great changes.

Gradually, and through her unbounded sympathy for Mrs.

Avery, her thoughts veered around from the general to the concrete. Channing's fate was beginning to take a foremost place in her thoughts, as it had taken in the thoughts of Mrs. Avery. It was the family worry, the great tragedy of the Avery home, and she was now a part of this family, of this home. They were treating her as such. . . . Mrs. Avery was treating her like a sister. . . . She was open-hearted with her. . . . She was baring her soul before her, her most intimate pains and griefs. . . .

Ruth felt herself growing day by day. Her vision was broadening. Her heart was swelling with sympathy. As the stricken member of the family, the one whose life had been dislodged from its proper orbit and whose happiness was being marred daily, Channing came in for a good share of this sympathy. It was indeed hard not to sympathize with him. He was so much of a boy, just an ordinary boy, human, eager, simple. (She had never seen his wife; Mrs. Channing never came to the Avery home.) His wealth was of little consequence to him. At least his relations to other people, to Ruth, made it seem so. His relations to her . . . Ruth often thought of them at night, just before falling asleep, or in the morning when she lay in bed awake and dreaming . . . It was unbelievable that such a thing could be true, but true it was. Channing treated her like one of the family; like a sister. Mrs. Avery was grateful to her brother for his generous attitude toward Ruth; she thought it so manly and democratic. . . .

The automobile was still more or less of a novelty in those days and Channing had the best runabout on the market. He frequently took his sister out riding. Once he asked Ruth to go with him. Mrs. Avery was out and he had to have some one to listen to his troubles, he had pleaded. As the

summer progressed the rides became more frequent. It was hard for Ruth to refuse him; he always seemed so distressed, disconsolate; he was suffering.

And then out of the clear sky it came — a subtle change in their relations. . . . At first Ruth was unwilling to admit it to herself. . . . Channing had said nothing, done nothing to change their relations. But the change was there none the less. . . . It was in the atmosphere. There were moments when Channing's prolonged gaze would send the blood mounting to her cheeks. . . . At other times, when he spoke to her, she was aware that he was merely making conversation; his thoughts were not in what he was saying. . . . They concerned themselves with some part of her — her form, her arms, her hair. . . .

The change frightened her. One night she could not fall asleep for hours. She tossed on her bed and wept. She wanted to be near her father, her grandfather. She felt so unsafe alone among strangers. . . . After all these people were strangers to her; they were not her kind, not of her class. . . . She had made up her mind to ask Mrs. Avery the very next day to release her and to secure her discharge from Sister Agatha and from the court. There was so much red tape to go through before she could gain her freedom. But perhaps Mrs. Avery would feel for her and would use her influence. She had no doubt that Mrs. Avery had influence. . . . In the morning, however, confidence returned and prudence. . . . She had better let well enough alone until the three years were up; then she would find her way home all right. . . . They could not hold her then. . . .

But her doubts kept recurring. After a day of ease and pleasure night would find her alone in her room, brooding. At times she was alarmed. She had made a mistake; she should not have gone into a rich home. . . . It would make

the return to the humble surroundings in which her people lived all the harder. . . . She wished she had never met Channing. . . . She could not get him out of her mind. . . . She was always comparing the boys she had known in her neighborhood with him. . . . She felt that she must not do it; it was unfair to the boys of her class, of her kind, this comparison, but she made it. And what sorry figures these express drivers, plumbers, painters, cut beside Channing. . . . Yes, her going into the Avery home was a grave mistake. . . . It would take her so long to forget her new surroundings, to get used once more to the people of her class, to their humble lives. . . . The more she became accustomed to her new surroundings, the more the feeling grew upon her that things would not last. . . . She would have come back to her people. . . . She should have gone there in the first place. . . . A grave mistake. . . .

But there were other moments, moments when she yielded to the ease and softness of her surroundings. The physical delight of her existence in such moments swept aside her mental scruples. . . . It was sweet to live as she was living, sweet to be treated as she was treated. . . . Channing was spending so much of his time at his sister's now. . . . His subtle conduct was manifesting itself more and more. . . . There was a vague challenge in it. . . . She would lie with closed eyes for a long time trying to make out the challenge. . . . It was like the faint echo of a far away song. . . . It was nice to dream even if one's dreams could never come true. . . .

Rain had kept Channing in at Mrs. Avery's one whole afternoon and he was talking to Ruth and gazing at her. Though he had known her for months he found something in her every time to surprise him. She seemed to him the most

complete woman he had ever seen. She seemed to radiate poise, self-possession. In her presence he felt cheered, strengthened. And yet she was so young. In spite of her studied poise he felt that she was as vibrant as a bow, sensitive to human suffering, alive with sympathy. Her innocent eyes were always big with feeling.

He was wondering what combination in the girl's life had served to hammer her out thus. He knew her history. She had been an inmate of an institution. She had known and experienced things he had never dreamed of. Was it this that made her so charming, so human, so lovable?

"So your father went to prison for preaching violence," he said, gazing at her through ringlets of smoke.

Ruth crimsoned from ear to ear and he made haste to explain himself. He did not hold this against her father. On the contrary — he —

"My grandfather missed going to jail — and perhaps to the gallows — by a hair's breadth," he explained, "and I have always been proud of him for it, for the stand he took against slavery. I often wish an opportunity had come to me such as came to my grandfather, such as came to your father — an opportunity to fight for a cause and to suffer for it. I want to meet your father. I should be happy, honored, to meet him. I hate the pack myself. I mean Wall Street, the traders on the Exchange who gamble in the sweat of the farmer and the laborer. I would like to see them wiped out. The world would be better for such a house-cleaning. . . .

"I suppose you think I am crazy to talk this way," he continued; "I who am a man of wealth, who do not have to do a thing and yet can have all the food and drink and all the luxuries of life. But I tell you I curse my money every day. My people sent me to school, to college. They thought

education would do me good, would make life sweeter for me. But it did the very opposite. It made me unhappy. It made me despise my class — myself. Through every one of my studies — history, literature, science — there seemed to run a contempt for money and for the men who possessed money. We were taught to admire Socrates and Plato, and they were poor people. We were taught to admire the poetry of Milton and he had written his 'Paradise Lost' when he was blind and poor. They taught us to go into ecstasies over Burns, and he was a raw, common peasant, ostracized by 'good society.' The scientists and philosophers of the Middle Ages whom we hold in high esteem either were in jail or were having the time of their lives dodging it. Almost every man who got into history as a big statesman, a big leader, had at one time or another been a prisoner, an exile, or, like Cicero, had had his head cut off and hung on a pole for the mob to gape at. You hear precious little about the sons of the upper classes in Egypt, Greece, Rome, or, in our own day, about the pampered sons of the French aristocracy or of the Russian nobility. But you do hear of Proudhon, you hear of Bakunin; and a poor, starved epileptic like Dostoyevsky is winning fame in Europe and one of these days will capture America. History seems to be especially partial to the poor. Or maybe it is not partial, but simply just. The poor struggle and suffer and know life. They are denied justice and hence they learn to love it, to fight for it passionately, heroically. And it is only by becoming a votary of justice that one begins to penetrate the charmed circle of fame and happiness. . . ."

One morning in September, Channing came up just after Mrs. Avery had left the house. He was disappointed; he had wanted to talk to his sister, he had to talk to her, he said. He sank into a chair moodily and lighted a cigarette.

"You look lovely this morning, sister," he remarked as Ruth passed him.

She was beautiful. There was a certain ease in her walk, in her carriage.

"Got anything special on for this morning?" Channing asked a few minutes later. There was a furtive look in his face. He was profoundly unhappy. Ruth felt sorry for him. Another quarrel, she thought.

No, she had nothing special to do that day.

"Suppose you come for a ride with me?" he suggested. "It is a perfect morning and I'm crazy to go somewhere — and talk."

Yes, she saw that he was crazy to talk, and she was not averse to listening to him, if there was any comfort in it for him. But she thought Mrs. Avery might be back soon, might perhaps want her.

"It's all right about sister," he said. "I'll leave a note for her."

Before she realized it, they were forty miles out of New York, and it was noon. He found a quiet inn and they had luncheon. There was not a person in the dining-room besides themselves. Channing puffed away at his cigarette and looked at Ruth. It was strange, very strange, that he should be sitting there with her, and, what was even stranger, that he should be happy, should be grateful for her company. But for Ruth he would have had a miserable day. She had saved him from torture — from himself.

The afternoon was going to be as perfect as the morning. They would not waste a minute of it. They climbed into the machine. In response to his mood, Channing rode slowly. They passed a brook. Urchins from a nearby town were splashing in the water. He stopped the machine and they watched the youngsters for some minutes. Two

or three miles farther on they came to a grove. A couple was lying under a tree, talking confidentially — lovers or maybe newlyweds honeymooning.

The spell of the woods was irresistible. Channing picked out a quiet spot, stopped his car and they sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree. . . . Out there under the spell of the trees it seemed almost unbelievable that only thirty or forty miles distant lay one of the world's greatest cities, where millions of men, poor and rich alike, were struggling like mad, were suffering, dying. . . . Ruth remarked this to Channing dreamily. Unconsciously they had come to share each other's views and opinions about society, about life.

Channing looked at the girl and he felt as if he had known her for years. She was like a sister of his — she was nearer. She shared his thoughts, she felt his pain. He saw it in her eyes.

His mood was on him again. He talked — he talked to her more freely about himself, about Emmeline than he had ever done before to any one. He bemoaned his fate; he fairly sobbed out his grief. What a fate, what a tragedy at twenty-seven to have one's life crossed and torn as his was. . . .

Ruth had not tried to interpose a word during his long speech. His sincerity, his suffering, were intense. She thought of this suffering. She forgot their difference in station, her own position. He was a man, a good man, and he was in torture — tortured by life. She would not change places with him for anything. What good was money when it handicapped one so? At least she was free — and he was not. But he was suffering. Was there anything she could do for him? Nothing? . . .

"I often wish," Channing was concluding one of his paroxysms, "I often wish I could fall asleep and wake to

find myself a different man, just a human being with, say, fifty dollars in my pocket. I would go out and get work in a factory or a warehouse, or maybe I would go on a farm. And then I would meet a girl — I know now the kind of girl I would like to meet — and I would marry and we would be happy for twenty or thirty years — that is all a man lives these days.

"But it is only a dream," he continued; "I have made my bed, as the saying is, and I must lie on it. I loved, or thought I loved, a hothouse plant, and I married for show, for a little society gossip, for a write-up in the papers, and now I am repenting every day of my life. God! If there were only a way of putting me and Emmeline where we were three years ago, and leaving us there! God! If things could be undone!"

Ruth felt it her duty to defend his wife. But his sincerity, the evidence of deep-felt pain, were in the way. She could not find words to upbraid him. It was not for her to judge. It was one of those tragedies of life where words are best left unspoken. She rose and turned away. It seemed to Channing that he saw tears in her eyes. . . . He was up in an instant and clasped her in his arms, kissing her face, eyes, hair. . . . She was inert, as if in a faint, for some moments. Then she began to plead with him to release his hold on her. . . . But he was deaf to her entreaties. He held her closer, closer. . . .

A wild look came into her face. She concentrated the force of all her young body into her arms, planted her elbows against his chest, and his clasp came apart. Then she ran. He overtook her. She was going to walk to the nearest town and take a train to New York. He pleaded with her to return with him in his car. He gave her his word of honor he would not talk to her, not say one word to her,

but would have her home in forty minutes. He would not delay a moment.

He kept his word. She avoided looking at him all through the journey. When they reached home she ran upstairs to her room without gazing at Channing, without speaking to him. . . .

It was four o'clock. Mrs. Avery had left word that she would not be home before six. Channing got into his machine and started off. After driving a dozen blocks he turned back to his sister's house. He would wait for her. He lounged about in the library, lit a cigarette, but tossed it aside half smoked. He picked up a book. He meant to read till his sister came. He was trying to fix his mind on the printed page. . . . He threw the book aside, ran up a flight of stairs, and knocked at Ruth's door.

"Come in," she called. She thought it was the maid. He opened the door. She was in a loose gown and was braiding her hair. Upon seeing him she trembled. . . . The blood suffused itself through her face, her neck, her bosom, which she had not had time to cover.

Channing closed the door behind him. Ruth turned her head away and took a step forward. She was facing the wall. There was no escape. He was at her side. She felt his chest against her shoulders. He put his arms about her. . . . She was pleading under her breath, incoherently. . . . He was drawing her down to the sofa. . . . Her struggles ceased; she begged in wild alarm . . . she threatened . . . she would cry out . . . scream, faint . . . she would — He was kissing her lips and shoulder. . . . Her speech grew faint, a hoarse whisper. . . . She could not move. Her body was limp. . . . Her eyelids were heavy. . . . When a child she often felt that way after a long day at play in the street, just so limp, paralyzed. . . . She was trying to recall

how long it was since she felt — arms about her — her mother's arms — and a face pressed against her cheek, throat, a burning, caressing face. . . . But her mother never caressed her so. . . . These caresses were like fire, strange — as if they came from another world. . . .

Something within her was responding to these caresses, drinking them in like quaffs of living water. Somewhere in her head there was a boring, a buzzing —" father," " grandfather," " wife," " married man," " wrong." But — within her heart, all through her body, a song was resounding. It was an irresistible song, and it was familiar. She had heard it somewhere before. . . . Where? When? Ah, she remembered! On her eighteenth birthday. It was the song of the flesh. . . . But it resounded mightier, stronger now. . . . It filled the universe with its strains. . . . It was sweeping everything before it, drowning all voices. . . . Everything was a song. . . . The buzzing in her head had turned to song. Channing's breath was a song. . . . It had become one with the song of her flesh. . . .

CHAPTER XX

CLIPPED WINGS

IN the subway, people were saying that it was going to be an ideal Thanksgiving Day. It snowed all afternoon and toward evening it turned cold. Girls, on the way home from work, who sat or stood beside Ruth, were talking of engagements that night and the next day and evening. It was to be a joyous time. The toil in stores, offices, factories was forgotten. For the next thirty hours every one was to drink his or her fill of delight and happiness from the bountiful breasts of life.

"If things could be undone," the words hammered through Ruth's head as she listened to the merry chatter of the girls and gazed in their faces, which were happy with anticipation. It was Channing's phrase. Two months had elapsed since that day when he had sat beside her on the grass and talked and talked and talked. . . .

Two months! But they seemed to her like years — decades. What had not she thought of in those months! Doubt and despair had been her inseparable companions. The torment of sleepless nights was hers, who used to sleep so sound. Even in the institution, in the Home of Redemption, night invariably brought rest and forgetfulness. Everything was changed now. . . .

"If things could be undone," Channing had wailed that afternoon; if he and his wife could but be put back where they were three years ago — Ruth recalled the expression

with which he had spoken those words. She would never forget that expression. She had never seen a man so tortured, so unhappy. She recalled how she had thrilled at the thought of her own freedom from such entanglements as bound him. She was poor, she was not yet entirely released from the institution sentence, but at least her person was free, while Channing's was not. Her sympathy for him that afternoon was endless. But to change places with him — never! Nothing in the world could induce her to part with her peace of mind. . . . And then — and then —

She was eating her dinner in a quiet restaurant on one of the side streets off Broadway when the memory of it came to her and her jaws suddenly refused to do her bidding. She could not swallow the mouthful. The knife and fork fell from her hand. Then — yes, then. . . .

Well she had lost her freedom. Her wings were clipped. Channing's burden had become her burden; his tragedy had become her tragedy. Fate linked them together. From the first she had tried to break the link, but after two months of struggle it was still unbroken. She and Channing were still held together as if by an invisible hand. All her efforts to free herself were vain. Why were they vain?

Yes, why were they vain? Resting on the couch in her apartment an hour later Ruth sought an answer to this question. She sought the reason for her being there, for her not being with her father, with Robert, with their grandfather in some little flat on the East Side. The reason? Channing was the reason. Channing held her in his grip. But he wouldn't hold her much longer. Her life must be her's. She would speak to him. She would insist. What did he propose to make of her? She had pitied him enough, more than enough. She would grow harsh, if necessary. The thing had to come to an end. She must be released from this

gilded cage. She must be allowed to return to her people. . . .

When Channing on that September afternoon released Ruth from his arms and she stood dazed and trembling before him she begged to be allowed to go home — at once. She could not stay under Mrs. Avery's roof another day. She would go back to her father and he could obtain her release from Sister Agatha and send it to her. . . .

With his sister — well, he would have to fix up matters with her by himself. She, Ruth could not look Mrs. Avery in the face.

Channing's answer was a plea for time — and immediate silence. He would arrange everything satisfactorily, if she gave him time. Meanwhile she must put the room in order. He helped her straighten things up. She must dress and come down to dinner — as if nothing had happened. He would stay to dinner and the next morning he would come for her. He would arrange everything, if she only gave him time — and maintained her calm, preserved appearance. . . .

He came the next morning and took her in his car. He drove to a family hotel on Broadway. . . . She was to stay there for a few days while he was arranging things for her.

The days passed over into weeks. Channing pleaded for time, more time. His affairs were muddled. He needed time to straighten them out. She must not be so angry with him, it made him unhappy, it hurt him. Why was she hurting him? . . .

He was a pitiable sight. His eyes were never at rest. He spoke and acted as if the whole world were after him, were persecuting him. His brain was always in a fever. The sight of his torments unnerved her. She could not see him suffer so. She would wait a little longer, give him time. He thanked her. He was kind to her, hysterically kind.

There were moments of passion and forgetfulness. . . . She loved him.

But a climax had to be reached. For more than two months now the thing had been dragging — it must not drag any longer. She was expecting Channing that night. He wrote that he would come, even if only for a few minutes. She steeled herself. She would not be swayed by pity, she would not yield to caresses. . . .

He brought her flowers and a book he wanted her to be sure to read. . . . He talked about the weather — it was bracing — she must go for a ride with him. He had more time than he thought he would have. She must go with him.

He did not at once observe the immobile expression in Ruth's face, but when he finally did notice it his chatter ceased. He took her hand, but she withdrew it. He gazed at her apprehensively. He feared to utter another word. . . . In Ruth the thoughts and feelings were welling. Finally she spoke.

"I want to go home," she was saying. "How soon can I go? Have you talked with your sister yet? How soon can you two arrange it with Sister Agatha to release me, to let me go?"

Channing hardly knew what to say.

"Why do you want to go?" he asked sheepishly.

"Why?" Ruth repeated with suppressed excitement. Had she not known Channing better she would have thought him base to ask such a question. As it was, she charged it up to his general helplessness. He simply did not know what else to say. "Why? Because I want to go to my family. I want to settle down. I want to look after my future —"

He tried to put his arms about her. But she pushed him back firmly though without anger.

"There is no basis for the thing we are doing," she pro-

tested. "You are married. It is unfortunate that things should have happened to us as they did. Maybe I am to blame for it all —" she spoke in a low voice, her eyes fixed on the floor. "However, there is no returning the past. But arrange it so that I can go now. I am sure your sister can procure my discharge from the institution, from court without any trouble. Please get it for me and let me go back to my people. I must begin to look after myself, after my own life. . . . Other girls of my age are far ahead of me."

He was gazing at her with agonized eyes. He had wronged the girl. But heaven was his witness he had not meant it that way. He had intended. . . . He had been keeping his thoughts from her. Should he tell her and set her at ease? No! No! He must not speak prematurely. It was not all clear to him yet. He must act first; then speak. He was full of tenderness once more.

"But you said you loved me — didn't you mean it then?" He was gazing into her eyes. "Don't you love me any more?"

She was silent. His suffering had not escaped her. But the thing had to be settled. It might as well be settled at once.

"Don't you love me any more," he pleaded again, and took her hand and kissed it.

"I do," she whispered.

"Then why leave me?"

"Because you don't belong to me. . . . I can't claim you. . . . Please — I want to go away as soon as you can arrange it. . . . Please let me go. . . ."

He was weeping. The girl's attitude unnerved him utterly. She had not a word of reproach for what he had done to her. The poor child! He kissed her hands, he begged her forgiveness. She must not think him bad. . . .

He would rather blow his brains out than have her think him one of the rich men who went after poor girls, who took advantage of them. . . . He was not that kind of man. He loved her — wanted her. He wanted her above everything in the world. . . .

He lay at her feet, a crumpled heap. She helped him raise himself and he laid his head on her lap. She did not object. But she did not relinquish her calm insistence. He need not rob himself of his peace of mind. She was not blaming him, nursed no grievances against him. All she wanted was to be allowed to go. She could not go without a paper from court, from Sister Agatha. It was up to him to get the paper for her. That was all she asked of him. She had given him time enough to straighten out his affairs. There had been plenty of time. She could not wait much longer. . . .

She was daily expecting a letter from Channing telling of the progress he was making toward obtaining her release. Instead he rushed in one evening, ten or twelve days later, and announced that he had left home.

"Emmeline and I have separated," he said.

Ruth looked at him dumbfounded.

"Aren't you glad?" he asked, irritated. In his fevered brain he had foreseen a different welcome.

Ruth pleaded that she was tired and he left shortly. He did not come the next evening. A letter on the following day informed her that he did not come because he was being shadowed by detectives. Mr. French, his father-in-law, had put them on his trail. She did not see him for a week. Then he sauntered in one evening with seeming boldness, though Ruth noticed that his hand trembled. A detective, he said, had followed him right into the hotel. But he did not care.

"Now they know it," he said, vainly striving to look unconcerned. "Let them go ahead and get a divorce, and I'll marry you."

Ruth stepped back and grasped a chair for support.

"But I can't marry you," . . . she finally regained her speech. "Your marrying me is entirely out of the question."

She was hurt, terribly hurt — and alarmed. What did he want of her! He had pleaded with her to wait — wait. . . . He needed time to adjust things, straighten out everything. And instead of extricating himself from his difficulties he was creating new ones. He was wading deeper and deeper into mud and was dragging her with him. . . . The detetctives had seen him come there. . . . Every one would know it now. . . .

Ruth was on the verge of fainting, but strength came to her with a rush — and anger.

"You have not considered me at all in this," she glared at him. There was despair in her gaze, disillusionment. "You have not thought of me in the least. Please let me get away from here. Let me go home. I don't want my life shattered, ruined, any more than it has been already —"

"But — why can't you — marry me?" Channing's voice was thick and lifeless.

"Have you consulted your sister about it? Have you talked to Mrs. Avery? Would she care to have me for a sister-in-law?" There was something terribly pathetic about Ruth as she spoke the words which brought her own standing into question. It seemed as if she were pronouncing a verdict against herself.

The blunder, the horror and hopelessness of the situation in a flash came to Channing. He had been mad, mad! What had he done! And there was no way out of it. It

could not be retrieved, undone. Never! He gazed around — at Ruth, at the room — with eyes not unlike those of an animal that has reached the end of a trail, with death closing in on it — and a precipice and death in front of it. He left the room without a word.

Ruth sat up and wept until late. . . . Steps in the next room woke her at two o'clock in the morning. Channing was there. She called to him; he did not answer. She heard him trying to open the window to the balcony. It occurred to her that he might not be in a condition to be standing on the balcony. He had come in slightly intoxicated on two or three occasions before. Hastily she slipped into a gown and stepped into the next room. The window leading to the balcony was wide open. Channing was not there. In the next instant there was a terrific thud in the courtyard — cries, exclamations. . . . A policeman and the elevator attendant found Ruth on the floor, unconscious. . . .

In the newspapers the following afternoon Channing's death was described as an accident. "The scion of the famous Channing family," one of the reports read, "has for some time been in poor health. Craving rest and isolation he took an apartment on the top floor of the beautiful Avon Hotel. His apartment commanded a wonderful view of the Hudson. Relatives of the deceased believe that he stepped upon the balcony for a breath of the cool night air and that vertigo, from which he was known to suffer, overtook him and he fell. As death was instantaneous, the exact facts in the tragedy will probably never be known. . . ." Of Ruth Conrad there was no mention.

Not only the French family and Mrs. Avery, but the management of the Avon, worked frantically with the captain of the police to have the detail that Channing was living with a young woman at the hotel suppressed. The Avon was a

high-class family hotel. It would never do to put the slightest stain on its respectability. While acceding to the relatives of the dead man and to the hotel management in giving Channing's death to the press as an accident rather than a suicide, the police captain — Captain Baer — nevertheless ordered Ruth Conrad taken into custody and held incommunicado until he had had time to question her minutely.

Mrs. Avery was frenzied. She blamed herself for the tragedy. It was her craze for making all sorts of experiments with the poor and unfortunate, she kept repeating to herself, that had cost her brother's life. Had she not taken Ruth into her house the tragedy would not have occurred. And now her own reputation was at stake. For if the truth about her brother's relation to the girl came out — if it became known that Channing had ruined Ruth — the thought was too terrible for Mrs. Avery to continue to the end. . . . No, it must not come out. Ruth must be silenced; her father must be silenced. They must be satisfied. Money would do it. But how? Who could manage it, arrange it for her? It must be done at once — quickly. And she could not even see the girl — could not talk to her. The police held her in custody. The police. . . .

In Mrs. Avery's sphere, in her home, they had always been accustomed to look upon the police as friends. Mr. Avery had often spoken of the police gratefully. In one state the police were defending his property against lawlessness from strikers; in another the police were doing splendid work in rounding up tramps who had been stealing and damaging freight, and saved the railroad company many thousands of dollars a month. The police guarded their homes, piloted their automobiles; they seemed anxious to be of service. She would take the police into her confidence.

Captain Baer seemingly was the sort of policeman one was

bound to have faith in. He was a big, fatherly man, deliberate, apparently very thoughtful. When he removed his official cap, his iron-gray hair, with the bald spot on his head, intensified the impression of kindliness. He looked like an indulgent grandfather, a home-loving man. Mrs. Avery decided to trust herself to the police captain. She told him the story of Ruth and her brother — the whole truth. Of course her brother had committed suicide. She had been in dread for weeks, months over her brother's entanglements. It was awful — if she had only had more courage — courage. . . .

With tears coursing down her cheeks, she confided her anxiety to the captain. She was afraid of Ruth, afraid of the girl's father. It was out of sheer kindness that she had taken her out of the institution. How could she foresee such a tragedy! But suppose the girl now turned against her — suppose people — a lawyer — set the girl against her? It would be awful. The world could not be expected to see below the surface. It would only know that Mrs. Avery had taken the girl out of an institution and that the girl was ruined by her brother. . . .

Captain Baer listened with a kindly, sympathetic look which went to Mrs. Avery's heart. No, she had made no mistake in confiding in the police captain. She felt better already. She shook hands with him as with a benefactor. In a mysterious whisper she told him that she would come to see him again at two o'clock and she wanted to see him alone — privately. . . .

The excitement, the wear of the morning increased Mrs. Avery's helplessness. She was weak, faint, when she reached the office of the police captain for the second time. As soon as the door closed behind them and she was convinced that

they were alone, Mrs. Avery took out a package from her hand-bag and put it into the captain's hand.

"There is five thousand dollars here," she said. "I mean to do the right thing by the girl and her father. Take it, give it to her, but see to it, please, that I am spared all humiliation and trouble. God knows I meant well by her." She wept.

Captain Baer put the bundle of bills into the drawer of his desk with the manner of a man who is taking charge of somebody's property and must see that it is returned intact. Then he spoke — just as Mrs. Avery wanted him to speak.

He assured her that she was a very, very noble person, that she need not fear the girl or her father. She never wronged the girl. It was Ruth who was in the wrong. These girls always were. It was a mistake to try to take them into one's home, to try to reform them. These girls never could be reformed. Institutions did them no good; nothing did them any good. Five thousand dollars certainly was a generous gift — it was magnificent. The girl might thank her stars that Mrs. Avery had such a kind heart. As for himself, Captain Baer appreciated Mrs. Avery's lofty character and would carry out her instructions to the letter. She need never fear any unpleasantness. He would attend to things and leave no loophole for anything like that.

Mrs. Avery was greatly reassured. She ordered her chauffeur to drive her to the French's. They had charge of the funeral arrangements. Her thoughts alternated between the funeral and a trip to Palm Beach. She must have a rest, must get away from all this, she thought, as she sobbed without tears. A long rest. . . .

While he was assuring Mrs. Avery of his high regard for

her unselfish, noble character, Captain Baer was thinking how he was going to dispose of the five thousand without laying himself open to immediate suspicion or leaving any grounds for future trouble. . . . He could not deposit the money in the bank, nor would it do to buy additional property at once. A Citizens' Committee had only recently concluded an investigation of the police department and the bank accounts as well as the property purchases of certain police officials were gone into minutely.

As soon as he closed the door on the departing Mrs. Avery, he transferred the bundle of bills from the desk drawer to an inside pocket. The disposition of the girl was the immediate problem. Ruth was held at the station without a warrant. As far as the official record of the Channing "accident" went, there was not a mention of her. . . . He assumed a very serious, very absorbed air, and called for Garrity.

Garrity was one of Captain Baer's "trusted" detectives. The captain had "a thing or two" on Garrity and Garrity knew of a few shady deals in which his superior had figured. They had nothing to fear from one another. . . .

"Garrity," the captain said with a preoccupied air, "this Channing case is not entirely cleared up yet. I am suspicious of the woman. She looks innocent enough, but it is these innocent looking things that are frequently made instruments of blackmail. Have a talk with her and report to me at four o'clock."

When, after an hour and a half of grilling by the detective, Ruth had regained her cell, she threw herself upon the hard bench and screeched and bit the tips of her fingers. She could not stay still a moment. She wrung her hands, begged mercy and wept, though there was no one to hear her. She went from one fit of hysteria into another. . . . The law was after her again. The Law! It was the curse, the doom of

their family. The law had sent her father to prison innocently, and thereby killed her mother. The law had taken her from her home — branded her. . . . And now the law was seeking to destroy her. Merciful God! What were they not accusing her of! Money! They were accusing her of bleeding Channing for money. She had driven him to suicide for money; killed him for money. A bad, designing woman, they called her. She was classed with criminals and blackmailers.

There was a long night ahead of her. What a night! She tossed from side to side; she sat up; she tried to walk the cell. Her eyes burned. Her head felt as if nails had been driven through it. Her tongue was heavy; in her throat a lump was making speech difficult. At nine o'clock, Captain Baer sent for her. He did not scold her as the man had the previous afternoon. But he held out no more comfort than the detective had.

She did not wish to confess to blackmailing Channing? Very well, he would let the jury determine that. Perhaps she would rather tell the truth to the court than to him; it was her affair. He would order her transferred to jail that afternoon. She would have a stay of six or eight months in prison until her case came up. He did not believe what she was saying and was deaf to her entreaties.

"You are all alike," he said with a sneer. "You carry on after you are in trouble. But why don't you think beforehand? Why don't you keep out of trouble?

"A girl like you, so young and already so bad, so bad." Captain Baer spoke with seeming regret, and rose. Ruth was taken back to her cell.

A few minutes later the captain was closeted with Garrity once more.

"Get the girl out of the city," he was saying to the de-

tective. "We don't want her here. We don't want her to annoy decent people. If she has not been blackmailing the Channing family yet, I have no doubt she will do so as soon as we let her out. Get her out of town — get her to San Francisco. Tell her if she returns we will hold her on a charge of homicide. . . . This will be my policy in the future with all such women. Run them out of here and don't let them set foot in New York again.

"Here" Captain Baer tossed a bundle of bills to the detective. "There is three hundred and fifty dollars here. It was found in the room in one of the girl's trunks. Give it back to her. She can buy her ticket to San Francisco with it."

Ruth was in a stupor from sleeplessness and exhaustion when she was ordered before Garrity. The detective gave her the alternative of being sent to jail to await trial or of freedom — and a train to San Francisco. Ruth's first question was, could she see her father before leaving. The detective raged. No, she could see no one, and she'd better take his offer quick or she might never hear of it again. The police were sick of dealing with wenches like her and that was why she was given the offer to clear out. But if she began to act smart she would be sent to jail forthwith.

"Take it or leave it," was the final word.

She took it. She could not bear the thought of jail. They had just an hour until train time. The detective took a taxi and rushed her to the ticket office. She procured passage quickly. On the way to the ferry he stopped in front of a pawn shop and bought her a cheap suitcase. At Garrity's suggestion she bought some bread and meat. The detective waited on the platform in front of the window where Ruth sat until the train pulled out. . . .

Fred Conrad turned white when the man displayed his police shield.

"Garrity is my name," the detective introduced himself with mock seriousness. "Have you seen anything of your daughter lately?"

"I have not seen her for ten days," Conrad replied slowly. He was anticipating trouble — more trouble — and was preparing for it. "Why — has anything happened?"

"Oh, yes; lots has happened," the detective answered with a twinkle. "And we are looking for your daughter to explain it."

Conrad was striving hard to retain his calm, to think. He knew nothing, had heard nothing. It was agreed between father and daughter that he was never to call on her at the Avery home. She was to do all the calling and she called on her father weekly. She had missed one or two visits because she was busy, she had said. Ruth had not breathed a word to her father about Channing, about his taking her from the Avery home. She was waiting every day for things to "settle," when she would go home to her father for good. Conrad told all he knew to the detective.

"Look here," the officer said, pretending to drop his mask of playfulness, "you either are acting the part of a fool or else you are one. Which is it? You don't mean to tell me that you are not aware that your daughter has been away from the Averys' for three months?"

Fred's astonishment was genuine.

"Well," the detective proceeded briskly, "she has been in with a gang, a bad gang. She has become a bad woman. We are looking for her."

It was Conrad's impulse to tell the detective that he was a liar. He had seen his daughter ten days previously, had

talked to her and he knew that she was not a bad woman, could not be one. But a man who has been to prison knows from experience that it is best not to cross officials and detectives, so he held his peace. In place of anger came helplessness. Tremblingly he sought to gather information about his daughter from the detective, but the latter noticed this and informed him that he was there to get information about the girl, not to give it. . . . As he was leaving, the detective made a passing reference to Conrad's prison record. For how long had he been imprisoned, and in what connection? Oh, yes; he recalled it now. Good-day.

"I guess the old man will leave well enough alone," Garrity reported back to Captain Baer. "He is scared stiff, and he is a meek sort of an individual anyway."

"Yes, one has to be very careful with an ex-convict. There is not one of them that is any good."

Captain Baer did not look at Garrity as he spoke, but the detective did not take his eyes off his chief. "You are protecting some one," Garrity thought. "And there is a big piece of change in it for you all right." And he wondered how soon his day would come for a "big piece of change." He had only lopped off a trifle of one hundred dollars from the three hundred and fifty the captain had given him for Ruth.

Conrad had sought out the Avery home, but no one answered. He went to the Home of Redemption, but Sister Agatha, after venting her fury on him, could give him no more information than the police had. The police had told her the same story: Ruth had got in with a bad gang; she had become a bad woman. She had run away.

Old Gottfried sought to uphold his son's hands. His faith in his granddaughter was unshaken. . . . It was a mistake to let her go to the millionaire family. He should have put

his foot down then. . . . Ruth should have served out her sentence and come home; she should have had nothing to do with those rich philanthropists. Their philanthropy was poison. Fred must find Mrs. Avery. He must get at her. She alone knew where Ruth was — she alone could enlighten them about the girl's whereabouts — and she should be made to tell. Robert agreed with his grandfather.

Meantime, Fred turned back to the only source available for information about his daughter — the police. He despised the police. In Detective Garrity he recognized the type he had once run up against, the human brute who could be hired for money to do anything, from scabbing and slugging strikers to manufacturing evidence and railroading men to jail.

"I guess we have her spotted," Garrity informed Conrad when the latter called. "She beat it to Chicago. We are not going after her — case not serious enough. Trust her, however, to get into trouble. Sooner or later the law will have its hand on her."

Fred Conrad was crushed. "Chicago — what could she be doing there?" he mumbled to himself. But the detective heard him.

"What could she be doing there?" he sneered. "Leave it to her; she'll find something to do. There are plenty of streets to walk there. . . ."

Conrad turned and slipped through the door noiselessly. But the detective called him back.

"If you are so anxious to find your little angel," he said with a malicious grin, "why don't you go to Chicago? You won't have much trouble finding her. The police there keep a record of such characters. They generally have such women registered. You might be able to get on her trail that way."

When Conrad shut the door behind him, the detective snickered. "Just like him," he mused, "to start on a fool's errand for Chicago." And he snickered again. "But the captain will be pleased all right."

At the very moment Fred Con[illegible]as dragging himself down the steps of the police statio[illegible], Ruth stepped into the railw[illegible]ing-room at San Francisco. There were signs on th[illegible] cautioning girls and calling attention to the Young Women's Christian Association. Ruth walked past these signs and past the woman who stood there apparently looking for strangers to whom she might be of service. The signs and the woman somehow reminded her of the Home of Redemption and of Sister Agatha, with her strict and monotonous Episcopalian services. She passed a policeman quickly, without looking at him. . . . She dreaded the police. She checked her suitcase, in which lay a few papers and magazines she had bought on the train to hide its bareness, and went out into the street.

She studied the cars for some minutes, and entered one whose sign appealed to her. The car passed through a large middle-class district. The houses, all two and three-story frame buildings, had many "To Let" signs. She made a mental notation of one of the cross streets, went with the car to the end of the line, and came back with it. When she reached the street on her return trip she got off. In front of one of the houses a woman was sitting with a child on her lap. Yes, she had a room to rent. Ruth looked at the woman and at the house. She wanted to make sure that she was among decent working people. She was, and she paid the two dollars required, got the key and went back to the station to get her valise.

CHAPTER XXI

GOTTFRIED RUMINATES

NOTHING was the same after Ruth's disappearance. The city was not the same; the streets were not the same; the people were not the same. Fred Conrad entertained not the slightest thought that his daughter had become a criminal — he knew her too well for that — still he had to overcome a certain dread every time he unfolded a newspaper lest he read of Ruth's arrest — or suicide. While pining for a clue to his daughter's whereabouts, he was thankful nevertheless every time he looked through a newspaper and failed to find her name in it. The passing of the postman set his heart beating faster. He was waiting, hoping for a letter from Ruth. He felt that she would find a way to write to him, to communicate with him, no matter what difficulties she was in. She was self-possessed like her mother and she loved him, loved her brother and her grandfather; she would write. . . . So he would stand in the hallway and watch the postman distribute his mail, and listen breathlessly for the calling of his name.

But no letter came. He sought once more to gain access to the Avery home, but no one answered his ring. He tried again, only to find the windows boarded up. While he was gazing mutely at the walls a servant came out from the basement of the adjoining house. Fred asked her about the Averys. They had gone to Europe.

The possibility that Ruth had fallen victim to a gang, in

the absence of any clue to the girl, was not to be dismissed lightly. Evidence of the gang and its operations was to be found at every turn. Whole sections of New York were groaning under gang rule. The coal man, Jacob Miller, an old school friend of Conrad's, had lost six horses in as many months. Gangsters had poisoned them. The coal man knew the gangsters, or at least their go-betweens, but when asked why he did not give their names to the police, he laughed a wan laugh. To tell the police on the gang would mean to sign his death sentence. He kept silent and was quietly making plans to slip out into the country.

But the heaviest toll the gang levied on the city was not in cash but in human bodies, bodies of young girls it could exploit. Fred was no stranger to this problem, which the newspapers were airing in their columns at frequent intervals. He had known several men, laborers, each of whom had reported a daughter to the police as "missing." These girls were never found and their parents were never the same afterward. The wife of one of the men died shortly after her daughter's disappearance. The mother of another girl was taken to an insane asylum. She was released after six months and went about her business apparently as usual, but she never looked people in the eyes again.

There were blocks in New York, entire streets in fact, which had an unsavory reputation. The saloons in these districts figured frequently in the newspapers in connection with murders; the hotels and rooming houses, in connection with suicides. These streets were known as the city's underworld. A number of trade unions had their headquarters scattered through these districts, and in his early days as a labor leader Fred Conrad had often passed through them on his way to meetings. But he seldom gave these places a thought. Now visions of them haunted him day and night.

It was in places such as these that his daughter, his Ruth, might perhaps be found. . . . He did not believe the detective, he did not believe his daughter to be guilty, to be in the wrong. But then it was known that many of the women in these places were there under duress — the gang held them there. Such too might be the fate of his daughter. . . .

He strolled through these streets frequently now, searching them with his gaze. And the streets were revealing themselves to him. He saw them as he had never seen them before. He watched the saloons in the district, the poolrooms, cigar stores. They always became alive at nightfall. There was always a profusion of young men in front of them, sleek, dapper young fellows, each of whom looked as if he had just left the barber's chair, where his face had been swathed in hot towels for a long time. There was a significance in everything these men said or did. Their faces, hands, bearing, showed no trace of work. In spite of their leisurely appearance, however, and in spite of their being well dressed, they did not look as if they came from good families. There was a lack of breeding, a coarseness about them, which was repellent.

One individual, especially, arrested Fred Conrad's attention, and he gave him a prolonged and searching gaze. Instantly the young man thus scrutinized became apprehensive. He followed Conrad down the street for nearly three blocks, and examined him in passing. He then turned back and upon coming face to face with Conrad, gave him a piercing look. Fred watched the maneuvers of the man, noticed his evident suspicion, fear, and guessed the cause of it. It was into the eyes of a gangster that he had looked, and the gangster had become apprehensive. So that was what they were like, these gangsters! And it was such a man that had robbed him of his daughter, that had made Ruth his

chattel, his slave. . . . He began to doubt whether Ruth would be able to write to him soon, after all. A man of the type he had seen, with his suspicions working overtime, might make it difficult for the girl to scrawl a line to her father for a long time.

Conrad worked irregularly. Robert was earning his livelihood in the packing department of a wholesale woolen house. And Fred did not need much. He even had a hundred dollars in the bank. He had saved it for Ruth. It was to be used on her homecoming. He was to get her clothes with it, nice clothes, for she was a young woman now. . . .

His sense of privacy, which had been very keen in the first few weeks, was becoming less poignant. Conrad ceased to hide his misfortune from people. He talked about it, guardedly of course, but still he talked, seeking information, advice, which might be of value to him in tracing his daughter. There was a woman in the neighborhood whose husband Conrad had known. The woman had "lost" a daughter the year before, and Conrad sought her out and talked with her. The woman gave him the names of societies to whom she had appealed to find her girl. But she warned him beforehand not to put too much trust in such societies. They made much fuss but accomplished little. . . .

It was while going from one of these societies to the other to enlist their help in search of his daughter, that Conrad collapsed one day. The bored expression with which the attendant at one place he called, a thin, long man with a choleric look, took his story down, was the last straw. His nerves, which he was holding in control with great effort, gave way. The world seemed in conspiracy against him. The police, detectives, the Garritys, were brutal, murderous. And the philanthropic societies, which were supposed to aid and comfort the poor, were a travesty. They had no heart. . . .

He dragged himself home with difficulty, and once he gained his bed he could not leave it. He became limp bodily and mentally. Robert and his grandfather took turns staying up and tending to him. It was two weeks before Fred made any improvement. When he was convalescing strange yearnings began to surge through him. His dream of California, of a log cabin there, became poignant once more. If he could only find Ruth he would not stay another day in New York, he would take her and they would start for the West at once. He had a little money saved. . . . He confided his yearnings to Robert and to Gottfried. Yes, if he only could find Ruth, everything would be well again. He felt his strength coming back to him. He felt capable of striking out once more.

The idea of going to Chicago occurred to him. Of course he did not believe Garrity. The detective probably had not the slightest evidence that the girl was there. But then Ruth might be there all the same. The newspapers often told of New York gangsters taking their girl victims to other cities; it was safer. Ruth might be in Chicago. And at any rate this sitting with folded hands would not get him anywhere. His brooding was only undermining his health. He would go to Chicago. . . .

Gottfried listened to his son and approved of his plan. The journey to Chicago might not do Ruth any good, but it would surely do his son good. Fred was in need of a change, some change, if he was not to give way under the strain. So Gottfried nodded approval to his son's proposals.

As he lay in bed motionless Fred felt himself equal to the task of making a trip to Chicago for the purpose of finding his daughter there. But when he was on his feet again his enthusiasm flagged. However, he proceeded with his preparations for the journey; to stay home idle was maddening.

Gottfried was always on hand with help and suggestions. He went over every detail of the proposed journey with his son, the plan which Fred was to follow in Chicago in search for Ruth. . . .

The disappearance of his granddaughter had affected Gottfried no less deeply than it had his son. From the first Gottfried made up his mind that the girl was innocent. Whatever might happen to her he did not for a moment doubt his granddaughter's mental purity. The conviction of her innocence along with the fact that the girl had character kept the hope of Ruth's returning to them ever high. Ruth was not the kind of girl to be dragged down easily. She would fight — fight her way out. She would come back. . . .

The evening before Fred was to start for Chicago, Gottfried left the store in charge of his grandson — Robert was quite capable of taking care of it — in order to be alone with his son. Robert would stay with his father all night and would have most of the next day with him. There were things that he wanted to say to Fred, Gottfried tried to make himself believe. In reality, what he wanted was to be near his son, to see as much of Fred as possible — on this last evening. He was telling himself that it was only a temporary parting. . . . Fred would be back soon — he hoped very soon — and perhaps with Ruth. . . . Nevertheless he could not free himself from a melancholy feeling. . . . Somewhere a thought was insistently recurring that it was a serious parting. . . . In the morning, the few things that Fred had in his flat would be moved to the rear of Gottfried's store. . . . The little home in which he had expected to receive Ruth would be broken up. . . .

Father and son talked in snatches as they sat facing each other across the table. There was not much to be said — everything had been settled, arranged. Besides, Gottfried

was finding speech difficult, annoying. His thoughts, too, defied him. . . . They persisted in running in a groove which he disliked. He had never been at the mercy of his thoughts so much as he was that evening. He gazed at Fred's drawn features and discovered that he had never seen him look so bad. He was but a shadow of his former self. Why, his hair was completely gray, and he was only forty-one. Other men at his age were in the prime of life. . . . A sense of horror, of deep, tragic failure took hold of Gottfried and shook him from head to foot. What a terrible fate to have brought a son into the world to! And he, Gottfried, was responsible, largely, entirely, for his son's fate, for Fred's seared face, for the tragic lines about his mouth, for the expression of unutterable pain in his tired eyes.

A fear seized Gottfried, a fear that his son's journey to Chicago would be futile, would end badly. Fred was a mental and physical wreck. He should not be entrusted with such a task. There might be illness, an accident, death. He was on the verge of telling Fred to call off the trip to Chicago, but his throat was thick. . . . His eyes were blurred. . . . Then something very strange happened. . . .

Fred's face became more and more like his mother's — in her last years. Gottfried was astonished at the resemblance. Never had he seen his dead wife so vividly. . . . Why, actually, Anna was sitting in the chair there, opposite him, sitting in Fred's place. . . . She was looking at him as always, perplexed, with big, submissive eyes — pained eyes. . . . But there was more than pain in those eyes now. Reproach was there. . . . She was speaking to him slowly, in a scarcely audible whisper intended seemingly for his ears only. He was sure no one else could hear her. . . . There was an indescribable pathos in her voice, the fathomless grief that goes with a terrible, an irretrievable loss. . . .

"What have you done to our boy?" she was saying. "Why have you forced all this pain and agony on him? Look what you have made of him. He is an old man now — you have made an old man of him. Look at his gray hair — Our Freddy gray-haired. Why could you not let him live his own life, live in peace, like other people? Why did you twist his life to suit a whim of yours? Why have you angered him for so many years, forced an unnatural silence upon him, out of pride, sheer vanity? Why didn't you come to him with your advice and experience — perhaps if you had stood by him, had been closer to him — as a father should be — he would have been spared all his trials. . . . Our boy, our Freddy —"

Gottfried, holding his face in his hands, was swaying in his chair. . . . Fred found business in the next room for some little time. . . .

Summer was drawing to a close. It was six months since Fred had left for Chicago in search of Ruth. He had written at first, though his letters were far from cheerful. He was not getting on with the search for his daughter. He feared it was a hopeless undertaking; unless Ruth took the initiative and wrote to them first, the task of finding her might never be achieved. . . . He was losing heart. . . . Then his letters ceased. Robert wrote to his father, begged him frantically to write, to keep them informed of his plans and whereabouts. The letters came back; Fred was no longer at the old address. They had no other way of reaching him.

His father's silence, added to the disappearance of [illegible] sister, had a peculiar effect upon Robert. It aged him physically and matured him mentally. His features were growing staid and manly and his mind was growing serious, almost too sober for one of his age. He was at his grandfather's

heel all the time, asking questions, seeking the old man's views — for Gottfried's views somehow always proved to be correct, Robert had learned from experience. His grandfather inspired not only confidence, but respect. He was resourceful, and was never at a loss for the proper word or deed.

In a measure, as Robert was inviting age, his grandfather was shutting it out. In the past Gottfried had never paid attention to his physical well-being and comfort. The question of illness and of death never worried him. If death came, let it come. It was not a thing one could avoid, so why think or worry about it. It was different now. He felt that just now he must have his health. There were a number of things he wanted to see through. . . . He could not bring himself to think of Ruth as lost to them. She would turn up and would have need of him, for Fred was weak and helpless. It was up to him, Gottfried, to take up the task which his son was unable to perform. He must put some sort of a foundation under Robert's feet. Thus far the boy had been drifting. Robert was working for nine dollars a week as a packer in a wholesale house. He had outgrown his job long ago and was hanging on to it solely because he knew of nothing else he could do. He could not hang on to it much longer, though. Soon he would be dismissed and a younger boy would be taken in his place.

But while Robert was a problem he was also a joy to the old man. The sight of his grandson growing into manhood thrilled and delighted Gottfried. Robert was more than a grandson to him. He was his hope, the last hope for the House of Conrad, the spark from which a flame might be kindled — and the dream of his life yet be realized. . . .

Often when Gottfried gazed at his grandson an incident of his *Wanderjahre* in Germany would come to his mind. Once as a boy in the course of his wanderings from city to

city evening overtook him on the road. He decided to build a fire and spend the night under the open sky. He had had only a few matches and he had used the last one. But the fire was not successful. It was dying, in spite of all his nursing. It was a gloomy prospect. Then just as it was about to flicker out, a wind came up, a dry leaf was blown up from somewhere. The flame was fanned to life again, fanned into a blaze. . . .

He associated his grandson with the memory of that incident. The dying dream of his youth — the establishment of a "House of Conrad" in America — might yet be fanned to life again by his grandson, by Robert. It was this hope which refused to be downed, that constantly tuned up his vitality and enabled Gottfried to defy the infirmities of age which would have sent another man, as strong as he physically but mentally less fortified, to bed. He still had a mission in life; he still clung to a dream. . . .

In his efforts to get nearer to his grandson, Gottfried now closed the store Sundays, and he and Robert would go out for a whole day to the park, seldom returning before nightfall. Gottfried had no qualms about closing the store for the entire day. The loss was trifling. The character of the neighborhood had greatly changed with the years, and the character of his patronage changed with it. One by one the old crowd had drifted away. Most of his one-time comrades, the early Lassalleans, were dead, and the few socialist pioneers that were living had left the district. They now stayed with their children, who lived either uptown or in the suburbs. Little Germany was no longer true to its name. It was swarming with newer immigrants, Jews and Slavs. Gottfried sold few German papers now and still fewer socialist papers and pamphlets. His trade in cigars had fallen off. There was an up-to-date cigar store on the corner and the newer crowd

went there for their cigars. They knew not Conrad and had not the sentiment for his place that the old-timers had.

These Sunday outings opened Gottfried's eyes to something which he had not hitherto observed, or rather had paid no attention to. It was the success and prosperity which the children of his fellow immigrants had achieved in America. At every turn he ran into the German name of a doctor, a lawyer, a large business establishment, a manufactory. Many of the names were of his former friends and acquaintances. The children of these friends of his had risen high in the world. He had known some of these children very well, for he and their fathers had lived and worked side by side. He and their parents had belonged to the same societies, to the socialist party. . . .

Yes, it was remarkable how few sons of the old socialist pioneers were actually in the movement to-day — socialists. The movement appealed to them no more than it had to his son. But whereas he had carried on a bitter feud with his Fred for years over it, these men had allowed their children to go their way unhampered. . . . And the result. . . . The brass plates announcing their professions, businesses; the automobiles in front of their homes, spoke eloquently of success, of achievement, of happiness, while his Fred. . . . Where was Fred? Gottfried had no regrets for himself. . . . He could not keep his ideal like an expensive ornament to be worn only on rare occasions. He had to live it, to make sacrifices for it. But — why had he interfered with his son? He should have let the boy go his way. He should have known better. Children seldom carried on the work of their parents. It was the way — the irony — of life. . . .

He would not make the same mistake with his grandson, however. He would not try to impose his ideas upon Robert. It was not a one-man job, this reforming of society, nor was

it a job for one generation, for one age. One man can contribute a little toward the improvement of mankind; a generation may bring the day of universal justice nearer. But in the main, Conrad brooded, the task of regenerating the world would be accomplished not by the self-sacrificing altruism of a few idealists, but by a quickened consciousness of the whole of mankind. What he now hoped for Robert was to see the boy grow up into an honest, earnest man, doing his share of the world's work, and resting content with that. Successful martyrdom, the kind which is rewarded by immortality, is a sacred calling to which one has to be born. . . .

Robert too was thinking of the future. His grandfather's restless energy was prodding him on. Ruth's disappearance and his father's silence caused him to shelve his plans for the time being. Nevertheless the plans were there, they were brewing within him. A persistent characteristic of Robert's plans was that they were leaving New York out of their calculations. He was thinking of himself as doing things, as achieving, but the battle-ground of his achievements was not a New York street, but the open country. . . . He was recalling his father's letter from prison, Fred's dream of a log cabin hidden by pine-trees in California. He often fell asleep with the vision of the pine-trees, of the cabin.

He was out of tune with New York. It was irritating him. He was beginning to hate it. The city had taken his sister from him. The loathsome side of New York revealed itself to him one evening and made him sick with disgust.

He was walking along Third Avenue when a familiar voice called his name. It was Frank Ryland, a schoolmate of his and a former neighbor. Robert recalled that he had missed Frank for more than a year. He surveyed him and was surprised at the prosperity the boy showed. Ryland's

parents he knew to be poor people. They chatted for some moments, Frank dodging Robert's direct questions as to where he was working and what he was doing. As they talked, Ryland's eyes were never still an instant. He seemed to be watching some one, somewhere, everywhere. Several girls passed. Their showy clothes, painted faces and lingering glances proclaimed their profession. They were underworld characters, and as they passed Ryland they greeted him with smiling, significant eyes. The boy replied in the same manner. The truth about Frank Ryland's occupation flashed upon Robert. He had heard of other boys who were living off girls, off women. A horror ran through him. He was too amazed for speech and started to leave. But Ryland hung on to him.

"Looking for excitement?" he asked with a sly wink.

Robert said something about being on the way home, and Ryland was ready with the next question.

"Still working in that woolen place?"

"Still there," Robert answered, glad to change the subject.

"What are you pulling down there — eight plunks a week?" Frank Ryland's voice was one of contempt.

"About that," Robert answered.

"Why, don't you chuck that concern, Bob, and come with me?" Ryland's tone was confidential, almost humane, as if he were doing the boy a real favor. "I'll fix you up — right."

Robert was too embarrassed to speak. He made another move to go, but Ryland came closer.

"Say," he whispered, "chuck that job of yours and come with me. You'll never regret it. I'll introduce you to a girl — a peach. She'll do anything for you. You'll never need to look at a job again."

"I'm much obliged, Frank," Robert replied and abruptly left him. He walked fast but Ryland followed him.

"Too good for it, eh?" he was sneering at Robert's shoulder. "You — Beat it as fast as you can or I'll have one of the fellows from over there," he gave a quick glance in the direction of several young men who were standing in front of a saloon, "cave in your face for you. Beat it, you —"

Robert never related this incident to his grandfather. He was ashamed. It was too humiliating. He hated the city, hated it from the depth of his soul.

In the daytime Gottfried's trade was mostly with children. He had taken in a small stock of candies and school supplies to make up for the loss of trade in German newspapers and cigars. In the evenings, however, his place would occasionally regain its one-time character and atmosphere. There were about a dozen men in the neighborhood, sons of Gottfried's former friends and comrades, to whom his little store was still a magnet. Before an election, on the eve of a great strike or of some important event in the socialist or labor movement, these men would seek out Gottfried's shop and would spend the evening there arguing, debating.

The discussions were not, however, as harmonious as of yore. While all of the men were trade unionists, not all of them were socialists. Some of them were distinctly opposed to the socialist movement and were bitter in denunciation of its program and especially of its leadership. The severest critics of the socialists were most often children of the very men who a generation back had made great sacrifices to build up the movement. Arthur Gessner was such a one. Arthur's father, Rudolph Gessner, was one of the early Lassalleans. Gottfried well remembered the days when he and Rudolph Gessner spoke from the same platform. Now Gessner's son

was the severest, though Gottfried had to admit, also a sincere and often very sane critic of the socialists.

Gottfried seldom took part in discussions now. He had been away from the movement too long and had not followed the trend of events closely. His, or rather his son's, family troubles had absorbed him completely. Only on rare occasions when he was appealed to for an opinion would he break his silence. He still read the *Arbeiter Zeitung* regularly, though he often found the English papers more interesting. They contained so much. It was from them more often than from the *Arbeiter Zeitung* that he got a real glimpse of the progress which his ideas, socialist ideas, were making in America. The world certainly was moving. It was going forward at a lively pace. Of course his dreams, the dreams of his socialist friends, of the pioneer Lassalleans, had not been realized. The social revolution, which they had looked forward to in their youthful enthusiasm, had not come to pass. But then — they had expected too much. He felt embarrassed at times when he recalled the extravagant views which he and his comrades once held. They were so greatly at variance with human nature. They had thought that socialism could change human institutions over night and human nature with it. They were young. They had believed in miracles after their own fashion.

But things had been going forward at a lively pace. Gottfried found evidence of this daily, everywhere. Most of what had been a purely socialist vocabulary thirty years back had now become common usage. Many of the ideas which when preached by him and his friends a generation ago were decried as treason, now were advocated by conservative statesmen. A few of them already had been framed into law. Great American newspapers now used the very phrases for which he, Gottfried, had, on more than one occasion, been

pulled down from the platform and clubbed by the police. Yes, time was a great jester. . . .

But while Gottfried looked with satisfaction upon the spread of his ideas, he could not free himself entirely from a distressing conviction that the spread of radical phraseology, thought, and here and there even law did not always imply a corresponding spread of reform. The economic status of the great mass of city workmen was not improving. It was, in fact, getting worse. At least that was his observation. More homes were being broken up every year by unemployment. The masses in New York, in all industrial centers, were forever living in dread and uncertainty. There was no twilight zone for the common laborer. He either had a job, enough to eat and a roof over his head, or he had no job — and in that case was face to face with utter want, with the gutter — or the charity organization. The quality of citizenship in the working class was of a low order. Character was declining. The beast in man was coming to the surface more and more.

Arthur Gessner indirectly laid the subject wide open one evening. Gessner was charging the socialists with a loss of character, a want of vision. The movement was no longer the vanguard of progress, he was saying. It was being undermined by narrow, selfish, clique leadership. The old party politicians were exploiting their parties for gain; the socialist politicians were exploiting the movement for vanity. In comparison with the leaders of a generation back, the socialist leaders of to-day, Gessner shouted, were "manikins, pygmies."

Gottfried half listened to Gessner at first. An item he had read in the evening paper had greatly stirred and shaken him. It was about a friend of his boyhood, a German immigrant like himself, who was now a wealthy farmer out West.

The item was like a voice from the past. He recalled the day when this boyhood friend of his had left New York to pioneer on the land. Gottfried might have gone with him; his friend had pleaded with him to leave the city. But he would not. He had felt the call to preach the new ideas of brotherhood and humanity to the oppressed and exploited city workers and he stayed with Kolb, with the others. . . .

The increasing vehemence of Gessner's arguments finally roused Gottfried and he began answering him. Arthur Gessner and his Fred had been schoolfellows together and Gottfried cherished the memory of those days, and was always well disposed to Gessner despite his violent antipathies.

"What you say is true — too true." Gottfried spoke, without passion, without heat. "But you are not distributing the blame evenly. The socialist party *is* suffering from a lack of character, but that is not purely a socialist fault. It is characteristic of the whole of our society. We are living in a characterless age. We are living in an age of *things*, not of *men*, we are living in an age that puts a premium on deceit, that makes a mockery of sincerity and a jest of self-sacrifice. We have been dwarfed. Parties, like men, are the product of their times, their age. The socialist movement takes its leaders from the material at hand, and the human material of to-day is of an inferior quality. . . . It is a big problem you have touched on here and responsibility for it cannot be saddled upon one group or class.

"To me," Gottfried came back to the subject after brief reflection, "the far worse result from this decay of character than the inferior brand of leadership, socialist or otherwise, is the deteriorating quality of the great army of democracy. The overbearing snobbery or autocracy of an individual leader I can observe with indifference, but the decline in the character of an entire class, one might almost say of a people,

leaves me worried. It is possible that at my age one becomes discouraged too readily, but I often find myself wondering if our city workers upon whom we have always relied to form the backbone of the great democratic army which is to liberate mankind — I am often wondering these days if these city workers have the stamina, the character for the job.

"The factory, industry, the ever-present specter of joblessness, batter all courage out of our city men. The fear of a hungry to-morrow makes a thief, a liar, a potential traitor and assassin out of every one. . . . I have been thinking these things over a good deal of late and I am in doubt. At times it seems to me as if the backbone of the great army of democracy of America will come not from the festering slums and the sodden tenements of the East, but from the broad fields and rolling prairies of the West. The West —"

Conrad grew silent. He was gazing over the heads of the people in the room as if he were seeing, discerning something in the distance. . . . No one disturbed his revery. He awoke from it after a few moments.

"Let me show you something." He produced the newspaper, marked the item about his boyhood friend, and passed it across the counter. It told of a man named Henry Esser, a farmer in the state of Kansas who was the father of ten sons and sixty-five grandchildren. The Esser family owned close to three thousand acres of land. Recently the father and his nine married sons put in an order for ten automobiles.

"Henry Esser and I were friends once," Gottfried explained. His mind was ages distant from the conversation of a few minutes previous. "We came over on the same vessel. He was heartbroken because he could not persuade me to go West with him — to the land. I am heartbroken to-day because I stayed here. . . ."

It was a momentary weakness that had wrung this unexpected confession from Conrad. And he had not seen his grandson sitting in a corner of the store, listening to every word he said, watching his grandfather's every gesture. He was under the impression that Robert was out. . . .

In a few minutes the place was deserted. Gottfried pulled down the blinds and, putting out the light, went to the rear of the store, to his living-room, to make a cup of coffee. The drinking of a cup of hot coffee before retiring was one of the concessions he was making to his advancing age. While Gottfried was busying himself about the gas stove, his grandson sat on his cot as if in a trance. Gottfried poured a cup of coffee for Robert and called him.

"Why haven't you ever spoken to me — like this — about the West, about land?" Robert turned on his grandfather pensively.

Gottfried was silent.

"At any rate," Robert continued, "I'm glad you spoke to-night the way you did. It has cleared many things for me. I know what I want now. . . . I am going West — I am going to be a farmer. . . ."

Robert looked up at his grandfather. There was the least bit of a challenge in the boy's gaze. He was determined to defend his ideas to his grandfather, to convince him that he was right and that his plans were practical. He had thought them out carefully. Gottfried studied the boy thoughtfully.

Robert was now speaking quickly, earnestly. The government was giving away land, homesteads in Nevada, Oregon, California. He read about it in a Sunday paper — Gottfried was selling the Sunday papers in his store now and Robert scanned them eagerly. There was a story there about a boy from the East who made his way to a homestead. Robert

meant to get such a homestead too. He would go to California. He would take out a claim there.

"You remember Father always spoke of California," Robert's tense features of a moment previous relaxed at the memory of his past, of their past. "He once wrote a letter from prison to us about California. It must have done Father good to dream of that far off state then. I shall go there. I want to have a farm in California. And maybe Father will find me there some day, and you and Ruth. . . ."

The Eastern boy in the Sunday story had worked his way to the West. Robert meant to work his way to California too. He began to outline to his grandfather a plan for getting there. He had enough money to take him to Chicago. He would work in Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, anywhere — he would work at anything — what difference did it make? It was only a means to an end.

Gottfried, too, had read the article in the Sunday paper. He could not help reading it; the pictures accompanying the story were so appealing. They seemed to tear one's imagination wide open. For days he kept seeing the picture of the little homestead in the Far West before his eyes constantly. . . . He gazed at his grandson. Robert was as tall as himself. There was an expression of seriousness about him that made him look manly, reliable. At the boy's age he, Gottfried, was a man, had roamed the world at will. However, there was a drawback that the boy in his eagerness overlooked completely. Gottfried reminded him of it.

"But you are only nineteen years old," he said. "The boy in the story was twenty-one when he went out there. They don't give homesteads to persons under twenty-one."

Robert's head sank. He sat motionless for some minutes. Then he rose, walked up and down the room, stopping in front of an old mirror which was hanging on the wall. He

gazed at himself intently then turned to his grandfather.

"I *am* twenty-one," he said. "I'm the right age to take out a claim."

Gottfried looked at his grandson pityingly. The boy was laboring under a terrific strain. The dream of the West, of a homestead in California, was too enticing, too fond a dream to give up easily.

"My son," Gottfried began, "I would not like to see you start out on any undertaking with a lie at the foundation. . . ."

He got no further.

"A lie! A lie!" Robert was in a rage. "Why, everything is based on lies in this city, in this world. I had to lie to get my job, and I lie daily to hold it. Do you call it a lie to deny two years of my life to the government in order to get to the land? Am I hurting any one with the lie? Besides, it is no lie. A man is as old as he has suffered. . . ."

He could not continue for emotion. There was an old dresser in the corner of the room. Robert staggered over to it, put both his elbows on top of it and took his face in his hands.

Gottfried watched his grandson for a time. That was a phase of the boy he had not suspected. He had always thought of Ruth as approaching him nearest in strength, and had classed Robert more with his father. He had underestimated the boy's character. . . .

He rose and, walking over to where Robert stood leaning against the dresser, put his hand on his grandson's shoulder.

"You are going West," he said, "and you are not going by devious routes. You are not going to work your way. You are going to take a train straight for Sacramento. . . ."

Robert stood up as if electrified.

"And while you are pioneering there, until you have subdued the land sufficiently to give you a living, you shall not miss your coffee and bacon in the morning — as long as I live, as long as I am able. . . ."

Long after the light was out Robert and his grandfather were still exchanging ideas about the coming journey to the West.

"You know," Robert said, and his voice seemed muffled, "I have a feeling that I shall find Father there. . . . He had always been dreaming about the West — California. . . ."

Gottfried did not reply. It was one o'clock when the boy finally fell asleep. But Gottfried was awake for a long time yet, listening to his grandson's breathing and seeing with his closed eyes a homestead far, far away, a house that was to be his grandson's, theirs, his — the House of Conrad. . . .

Late on a misty September evening, two men were stealthily making their way between long rows of freight-cars in one of Chicago's enormous freight yards. One of the men was Fred Conrad. The younger of the two, a boy of twenty-five, led the way. Both were dressed in frayed summer garments and each had a diminutive bundle under his arm — all his worldly possessions. It was the younger one who was studying the freight-cars with the eyes of experience. He examined more than a dozen and finally found one whose door yielded readily. He climbed into it as swiftly as a cat and then helped the older man pull himself up after him.

"It's easy to see that you're new to the game — the way you tried to climb into the car," the youth whispered indulgently. He moved the door back in its place, put his ear to the side of the car and listened. There was no one near.

"The train pulls out at midnight," he confided. "If we are lucky, we will make Kansas City at one stretch."

In the company of the boy, who despite his youth was a confirmed tramp, Fred Conrad was seeking to find his way West to escape the rigors of Chicago's winter. A prolonged stay at the County Hospital had left him greatly weakened physically and mentally. Nothing seemed to matter much to him except cold. His whole body was sensitive to cold, his chest especially. After the excitement of stealing his way past all sorts of switchmen and train attendants, a weakness overcame Fred, and a chill. But the thought that he was leaving the city behind him, that he was to escape to a warmer climate, to California, cheered and heartened him. He had a vague feeling as if he were at last going home to friends, to very dear friends. . . . His mind was wandering. . . .

CHAPTER XXII

THE DEATH OF FRED CONRAD

WHEN the employment agent, as a matter of routine, asked for her name, her heart stood still for an instant — and then she answered. But she gave her name in a raised, tremulous voice. Her "Ruth Conrad" had a ring of both alarm and challenge in it.

The agent noted the changing emotions of the girl and how she mastered them, and put her down in his mind as a "determined young person." Determined was precisely what Ruth was. He found it out in the next few minutes when she began to describe to him very positively the sort of place she wanted. She wanted a job that required no experience and that could be learned in a reasonable time. She wanted the agent to make sure to tell her prospective employer that she was without *experience;* she desired no misunderstanding with any one on that score. Furthermore, she wanted no flimsy kind of a job. She turned down point-blank a call for a waitress in an ice-cream parlor and another for a girl to work in the checkroom of a large restaurant, though neither of these jobs called for experience. Housework, any kind of housework, Ruth said, would suit her better. Likewise she drew the line against going into a very rich home. She preferred an employer from the middle-class, even from among the poorer people.

The agent glanced at a list in front of him, the day's urgent calls for help.

"The nearest thing I have to housework," he said, "that is where experience is not called for, is this place here, the Hugo Rooming House. Mme. Lamarck, the keeper of the rooming house, wants a maid to help her with the work. No experience is required; she prefers to train her own girls."

There was a dubious look in Ruth's eyes at the words "Mme. Lamarck." The agent perceived it and made a mental note of that too.

"You need not worry about the name," he explained with the faintest trace of a smile. "The name of the woman I am sending you to is Mrs. Fitzgerald. But the woman who kept the place before her was known as Lamarck and I sometimes get the names mixed and refer to the new proprietor by the name of her predecessor. You will find Mrs. Fitzgerald a nice person to deal with. She is straight and is considerate to her help; she has a reputation for that."

Whenever Ruth recalled the morning the employment agent asked for her name — the first time she had been asked for it in San Francisco — she was filled with a quiet happiness. She was glad she had given him her real name, glad she was known by her *right* name. Her name was now the only connecting link between her and her past. It was dear to her, all the more dear because she had been so near losing it. She trembled whenever she recalled those days of doubt and indecision. . . .

For three days on the train from New York to San Francisco she was in dread. Constantly she feared she was going to be arrested. Every time the conductor walked past her she had to suppress a desire to jump up and cry out her innocence. At one moment she was sorry she had left New York; she might as well have faced everything there and have it over with. The next moment, however, she would vow that if she got to San Francisco she would never, never want to

see New York again. If she only got there safely, she would promptly change her name; she would sever all connections with the past, no matter what the cost might be, what pain it would give her.

The thought of changing her name had become a fixed idea with her for a while. Therein lay safety. She would obliterate her past completely. She would cease to be Ruth Conrad; she would become Margaret Clark — Miss Clark. "Miss Clark, Miss Clark," it kept ringing in her ears. And suddenly her own voice seemed strange to her. It was hoarse and unpleasant. . . . It was not her voice any more. . . . No, a thousand times no! She would not change her name; she would stay what she was — Ruth Conrad. Ruth — no matter what came, in the face of everything. . . . She looked furtively about to see whether any of the passengers in the car had divined her thoughts, her base, ignoble thoughts. But the passengers seemed quite oblivious of her. It was half-past seven in the evening. The porter was making up the bed for a woman with a baby. An aged couple were playing cards. A prosperous fur merchant from Michigan, who was going to San Diego with his wife, had found a willing auditor in a young man and was telling him at length the story of his own success, interspersing it with morals and encouragement. Some one was saying that during the night they would cross the highest point and that the next day they would reach the desert. Ruth was glad when the porter had made her bed. She crawled into it and found relief from a day of doubt and torture in tears.

She awoke with a memory. It was the memory of Mary — the blond Mary Parker. Mary was an inmate of the Home of Redemption. She had the face of a saint, was very pleasant and good. And yet every one at the Home mistrusted her because no one knew just exactly who she was. She had

gone by several names, according to the police, and in spite of the fact that all the girls at the Home liked her and were won by her pleasant ways, they could not refrain from asking her now and then, jocosely or in earnest, "Mary, are you really Mary? Is that your real name?"

Mary was hurt by the mistrust of the girls at the institution and when she was alone with Ruth she frequently philosophized to her.

"Whatever else you do," she once counseled sadly, "stand by your name. Stand by it and it will stand by you. If your trouble is trifling, it won't affect your name much; it will soon be forgotten. If it is serious, the fact that you changed your name will lend it a more sinister aspect."

Mary's advice confirmed Ruth's final determination not to change her name. But more than the memory of the past, the living present now presented the strongest argument against such a course. When she climbed out of her berth she found the car flooded with sunshine. Through the window the country presented a wonderful spectacle. The plateau, with here and there an adobe village from which the smoke was curling lazily, was soothing, comforting, like the hand of a mother. But it was the Arizona desert that presented the strongest argument against changing one's name. The desert seemed endless. The purple hills, which stood imperturbable in the distance, shed some of their serenity into Ruth's heart. New York seemed but a bad dream. As she lay back in her seat gazing at the dry stubble and cactus which seemed to line the whole earth and become one with the horizon, she recalled Biblical scenes she had read in her Sunday-school lessons. She forgot the train, the evidence of twentieth century civilization, and was ready to believe herself the child of another age, of an ancient tribal community. . . . There was such a distance between her and her imme-

diate past — such a vast distance. . . . No, she need not fear to go by her right name; she need not hide it — thank God, she need not. . . .

In San Francisco she began to waver. Perhaps, after all, it would be safer to change her name. . . . The city was so much like New York — big skyscrapers, busy streets. The policemen looked the same. There were telegraph offices everywhere. A telegram from New York reached there within an hour. It was almost as if New York had moved next door. . . . Fear was once more uppermost in her mind and it called for every ounce of courage she possessed to overcome this fear and to give the employment agent her real name.

That was why she thrilled with joy every time she recalled the morning on which her name — her self — was saved to her. When addressed as Miss Conrad by one of the roomers in the house, or as Ruth by Mrs. Fitzgerald, she would often forget the bitterness of her existence — her loneliness. . . . Her separation from her family would seem only temporary in such moments, the cloud would soon be lifted. . . . Something would happen and they would be reunited once more. . . . It was not possible that the break in her life would never be made whole again, that the wound would never heal up. . . . The sun was shining the same as ever. People all around were kind and humane. Something would, must happen, to lift the gloom of separation. She was awaiting, she did not clearly know herself what, but she was awaiting something. And of course she did not write. . . . That might be dangerous. . . .

Letters were not to be relied upon. She had known a girl at the Home of Redemption who had been trapped by a letter she had written. Detectives had traced her by means of that letter. No, she would wait until — until. . . . Her thoughts were hazy, but her feelings were definite. Some

way, somehow, the connection between her and her family would be reestablished. They were always in her thoughts — her father, Robert, her grandfather — always. . . .

Mrs. Fitzgerald turned out to be all that the agent had claimed for her. She was considerate with Ruth, considerate with every one. She was tolerant of people and of life. It was a tolerance that came with age and understanding. Mrs. Fitzgerald's husband had been the manager of a sewing machine company. He was doing well and they lived in a wealthy section of San Francisco. They had no children and so they always felt young — far younger than they were. At forty-eight Mr. Fitzgerald felt that he was just entering his career in earnest. His wife was forty-five, but still pretty much of a girl. One Sunday Mr. Fitzgerald went on a hunting trip with friends. One of those frequent accidents happened and he was brought back dead. He had shot himself. His insurance just enabled Mrs. Fitzgerald to buy out the rooming house from Mme. Lamarck. And then came wisdom and understanding and tolerance. . . .

She insisted on running a "straight rooming house," "a home," as she phrased it, and therein lay the secret of her success. A "home" appealed to most people. Her twenty odd rooms were always filled. They were filled with women, self-supporting women Mrs. Fitzgerald called them, and asked no further.

"I require no references of my roomers," she explained to Ruth soon after the girl came to work for her, "but I tell my prospective tenants that I rent out rooms for a home only. I don't pry into anybody's affairs. This is a large world and there are all sorts of people in it, and since they are here, I presume they have a right to be here. I pass judgment upon no one. But I insist on keeping my side of the street clean. If a man wants to drink, let him go to a saloon. If

a woman wants to make a pig of herself, let her do it elsewhere. This is his or her home."

That Mrs. Fitzgerald was not prying into anybody's business was very evident. Ruth was left strictly alone by the landlady in all matters pertaining to her private or family life. Mrs. Fitzgerald made not the slightest attempt to ascertain who Ruth was, whence she came or what brought her to the work of a chambermaid. This, in spite of the fact that they were often working together for hours, mending and sorting linen, and doing other work about the house. Ruth appreciated her employer's attitude and showed her appreciation of this quality of reserve by exercising it herself toward the people with whom she came in contact — the roomers.

She had a feeling that every one of the women roomers would appreciate her lack of prying into their lives, just as she appreciated her employer's want of interest in herself. And so she did her work well, answered a request courteously, but never lingered longer in any one room than was necessary.

While she restrained her curiosity, she was none the less interested in the life of the women roomers. They were all older than she and her life ten years hence might be the same as that of these women now. Only about half a dozen of the twenty women roomers left the house at eight o'clock in the morning. The rest were seldom up before ten. Some slept later. The shifting, uncertain ways women had of making a living in the city were unfolding themselves before Ruth's eyes of their own accord. Sometimes Mrs. Fitzgerald would volunteer an observation that would shed a flood of light on the dark recesses of the city's life.

"Give Room 11 a complete overhauling," Mrs. Fitzgerald told Ruth one morning.

The girl looked up at her with surprise. A complete overhauling was given a room only when some one moved out and the room was to be made ready for a new tenant. Mrs. Walsh was occupying 11 and Ruth had not heard anything of the woman's going.

" A detective was here a few minutes ago making inquiries about Mrs. Walsh," Mrs. Fitzgerald explained. " She was arrested in a dance hall in Barbary Coast last night. A watch was stolen from some man and she was taken with several other girls. I don't know whether she is guilty or innocent, but I don't want her here any more. Put her things in the closet and let them stay there until she calls."

" To look at her," Mrs. Fitzgerald returned to the subject of Mrs. Walsh later in the day, " you would think she was a minister's wife. The innocent way she parts her hair and the modest manners — you would think she had never heard of Barbary Coast, let alone going to dances there. However, that is just the way things go."

Ruth was not shy of people, but she was fearful of them, and she made no friends. Her fear of arrest, of being taken back to New York had become faint. Nevertheless, she avoided being drawn into intimate relationship with any one, for intimacy was bound to end in questions about herself, her home, her family. And that was a subject that had best remain untouched. As soon as any one, man or woman, attempted to become friendly she drew back.

But, just as without her prying the city of its own accord was unfolding its mysteries and tragedies to her, so unconsciously she had been drawn into a friendship with one of the roomers. The young woman was known as Lolita Anderson, and in a burst of confidence she told Ruth that that was not her name — that she had assumed it after she went into " this life."

Ruth had half suspected the kind of life Miss "Anderson" was leading from the hours the woman kept, but she was not prepared for the double-barreled confession.

"Don't ask me my right name, or where I come from, or why I am in this life," the girl once said to Ruth, a little exasperated. Ruth had been out of sorts that morning and she was looking at Lolita sadly, quizzically. "I like you too well, and if you begin to ask me too many questions, that will spoil our friendship."

Ruth asked no questions — had not intended to — but often in the afternoon when Miss Anderson would be dressing, Ruth would come in and they would chat for a few minutes about the weather, or a sensational story in the newspaper, or a headache and what was good for it.

Every other Sunday Ruth had the afternoon off. Just before going out one Sunday, she stepped into Lolita's room. The girl was lying on the bed looking through the Sunday paper. She stared at Ruth without speaking for some moments. There was a far-away gaze in her eyes.

"You look," Lolita finally broke the silence, "as if you had just stepped out from a page in the Bible. You know where you belong with that face of yours, child? In a church window. I wonder how you ever got here, anyhow. You don't belong among us. You look like a saint. Who, what are you, anyway?"

Lolita was heavy hearted, and her mood readily communicated itself to Ruth. The question which was supposed to be banned between them had slipped Lolita's tongue, but Ruth was not angry. It did not exactly call for an answer. Ruth found herself questioning Lolita in turn — how she had come to this life, what she was doing toward getting out of it.

The young woman did not answer Ruth at once. She gazed at the girl in contemplation. Ruth was young and beautiful. She was the kind of girl men would fall in love with in a trice. And she sat there in the rooming house, a chambermaid. Lolita had lived in the place for nearly a year and Ruth was there when she came. Was she not at all aware of her charms? How could she stand this life of drudgery and loneliness?

"It was lonesomeness in my case," Lolita finally responded. "I came to the city to work as you are doing here and I was lonely. Everything ached within me for loneliness. Then *he* came. He was a man after my own heart — or seemed to be. We fell in love; he was a wonderful lover. We could not marry; he did not earn enough to support the two of us. But he was a dear and I could not resist. . . . Then when I was in trouble he disappeared. I never heard of him again. . . ."

Lolita paused a moment. She seemed to be pursuing a vision with her eyes. . . .

"Once you have had a man, a friend," she continued, "you crave for friendship. You loathe men and you love them. You cannot hide your yearning for them. Your eyes betray you; they beg for company, for friendship. . . . I ceased to be myself. I could not fix my mind on work. . . . I was unhappy. Another man appeared. We stuck to each other for a while and then I left him. I was sick of him. I had no work and the rent was not paid and I had to live. There was a woman in the same rooming house. We talked occasionally. I confided my trouble to her. She whispered a suggestion as to how to make an easy living. Well, here I am. Easy. . . ." She laughed a contemptuous laugh.

"How long do you think *you* will be able to stand it — this life, I mean, the loneliness?" Lolita asked Ruth. "You

are a puzzle to me, child. I wonder how you can stand this drudgery, and I wonder still more how you have escaped unscathed with that face and figure of yours."

"I am used to loneliness," Ruth replied slowly, her eyes filling with memories. The memory of Channing lingered but an instant and gave way to the memory of the two years she had spent at the Home of Redemption, the terrible loneliness of the place. They were not in vain, those years of helplessness and torment. She would capitalize them now, the strength they gave her. She would be stronger than Lolita. Loneliness would never drive her into a man's arms. . . .

Shortly after this conversation Lolita moved. She was leaving town and would not say where she was going. Ruth felt as if a void had come into her life.

One morning a couple engaged a room and Ruth fixed it up for them and gave them the keys. The man was very polite and pleasant. The woman seemed positively happy in their new home, as she called it. An hour later, half a dozen shots threatened to split the sides of the building. Mrs. Fitzgerald ran to the door. It was barred. She called in a policeman and they forced it open. The woman was lying on the floor in a pool of blood. The man lay at her feet. Both were dead. The coroner declared the case to be murder and suicide. The bodies were removed to the morgue.

"One must expect such a thing from time to time in this business," Mrs. Fitzgerald tried to calm Ruth with her philosophy. "One can keep a house straight easy enough, but one cannot prevent a woman from turning on the gas or a couple from murdering each other."

The man that Mrs. Fitzgerald kept for the rough work about the house scrubbed the floor and washed off the bloodstains from the carpet. Mrs. Fitzgerald herself attended to

the rest and before nightfall the room was ready for occupancy once more. But Ruth shivered every time she passed it. She slept little that night and the next morning she came down with red eyes and announced that she was going to leave. Mrs. Fitzgerald tried to dissuade her, advised her to be less sensitive — a suicide might happen anywhere. But as Ruth would not be swerved from her determination, the landlady ceased urging her.

When Ruth was dressed and ready to go down in the street, she came to Mrs. Fitzgerald and timidly asked her if she could give her name as a reference at the next place she applied for work.

"You can," Mrs. Fitzgerald assured her warmly. "And it is the very best of reference you will get. Good luck to you, wherever you go. You will stay straight wherever you are. You must have had a good mother, girl, a very good mother."

Ruth's eyes were blinded with tears. She extended her hand. Mrs. Fitzgerald put her arms about her and kissed her.

"A young woman for restaurant work," the advertisement read. The address given was that of an office building. It was different from the usual run of advertisements in that it did not specify the nature of the work to be done, or call for experience, and Ruth decided to answer it before going to the employing agent. In a small office sat an elderly man and a girl stenographer. The man, Mr. Mackenty, kept Ruth standing at a distance for some moments while he gazed at her. He then motioned her to a chair and began to ask questions. Where had she worked last? When had she left? Had she references? Only one? Well, she might come in at ten o'clock the next morning. In the meantime he would call up Mrs. Fitzgerald.

Ruth came at the appointed time and Mr. Mackenty greeted her cordially.

"Mrs. Fitzgerald spoke very well of you," he said. "I am especially pleased with the fact that you stayed with her for nearly two years. That shows that you are not a flighty sort of person, which is just what I need. Now, the proposition is this: I am trying an experiment. I am running a chain of restaurants for poor people. I give wholesome food at popular, in fact, cheap prices, and I serve it in a nice clean place. Some of these restaurants are located in districts that are what might be termed tough. I have tried the experiment in two such places, in rough districts, of putting a woman in charge of the restaurant and the experiment has worked well. The presence of a woman manager who oversees the waiters, who helps out the cashier, says good-morning to the customers, I find has an admirable effect. It makes for order. There has not been a fight or any kind of trouble in either of the two places since I placed the women there.

"Now I am planning to put a woman manager in a third restaurant. Do you think you are the woman for the place?"

Ruth gazed at the man in surprise. She had not expected the last question. She was there to look for work. It was up to him to say whether she was the person for the place or not. She answered him to that effect.

"As far as I am concerned," Mr. Mackenty replied, "my mind is made up. I think you are the person for the place. The matter is really up to you. Do you think you are the woman for such a job?"

"Well," said Ruth, "I know nothing about the restaurant business."

"That is no consideration whatever," Mackenty replied. "We will teach you all you need to know about the restaurant

business. What I expect of you is to keep order in the place — to handle people so that they will have respect for you and for the place. Do you think you can do that? If you think you can, the job is yours."

"I would like to have a try at it," Ruth said. "I think I could manage it."

"All right then. Come in here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning and we will go over to the place together. The salary is fifty dollars a month to start. You will, of course, board yourself at the restaurant and save that expense. . . ."

Ruth had a whole day before her and she went back to Mrs. Fitzgerald — to visit. For the first time San Francisco seemed home to her. She felt that she had a friend there. Mrs. Fitzgerald was a friend.

The world seemed to be on parade. Men of all nations came through the restaurant door daily, walked past Ruth Conrad and received her cheerful good-morning. If the place was well filled, she helped them find a seat. If the waiter was busy or slow she cleared the table for a customer and took his order. There were men of all ages and descriptions among the patrons. There were laborers, expressmen, teamsters who ran in for a beef stew; and there were men who had begged the price of a cup of coffee. There were men in threadbare coats and frayed trousers. There were young men with hardened faces and old men with traces of refinement in their features. There were boys, stolid looking youths, who had sought adventure and found starvation; or well meaning lads who had slipped back in the game of life and had relaxed. Men from the remotest parts of the earth, fezed Turks and turbaned Hindoos rubbed shoulders with tattered Yankees from the East and derelict colonels from the South.

There were many men of her father's age, and her father's physical condition, among the customers. Among the boys there were many who were the same age as Robert. Frequently the face, voice, or gesture of one of these would remind her of her parent or brother. Such a man, or boy, would immediately get her warmest attention. If he ordered a bowl of soup, she was quick to bring him the bottle of catchup, or would give him a double order of crackers. When such a man left, she would watch out for him at the door and whisper good-day to him with so much kindness that the man frequently was moved to reply, "God bless you, lady."

She worked from eight in the morning until eight at night. But in spite of the long hours she was never overly tired. The work was not fatiguing; it was interesting. It was as if she were reading a good book. Every face she met was a story. . . .

She dreamed a great deal at night. Sometimes it was about the day's happenings. More often she dreamed of home — her home of long ago — of her childhood. In those dreams her father, mother, brother and she herself appeared as they had looked years ago, when they had their little home in the Bronx, long before the train of calamities had overtaken the family. Once she dreamed that her father had come into the restaurant. It was a windy day and he was thinly clad. His face was pale and his eyes jaundiced. He seemed hardly able to drag himself along and was about to pass without recognizing her, but — she shrieked, and awoke. It was five o'clock in the morning. She tossed on her bed for another hour, moaning softly, and then rose and began to dress.

Henceforward she scrutinized her customers, without giving herself a definite reason for doing it. She was not expecting

to find her brother or father among them. But she might find perhaps some one from New York, some one she had known. . . . New York was in her thoughts constantly now. This persistent thinking of home made her melancholy. Her speech was softer than ever; her face kindlier. Many of her homeless, friendless customers came to the place in preference to nearer restaurants solely for the pleasure of seeing her face and hearing her soft voice as she inquired whether the coffee was hot enough.

She was planning to write home; it was time she did. She no longer feared trouble from New York. Three and a half years had passed since the day the detective had put her on a train for San Francisco. She had learned much in those years. She read in the papers daily of women being acquitted by juries of serious crimes. And she was innocent, had committed no crime whatever. Another girl in her place might even have made trouble for some people — the Averys, the police. . . . She had heard of such things. But not she. She loathed the thought of laying bare her secrets before the world. However, there seemed to be no visible danger in writing to her home, to her father, now. . . . Still she postponed doing it from day to day. If she only had a friend to confide in, to ask advice of, to talk with. Mrs. Fitzgerald was a good friend, but she somehow did not seem the proper person for such confidence. Ruth felt toward her more as she might feel toward a blood relation, an aunt. For such things she needed a chum, a friend of her own age. She could talk to no other about such subjects. . . .

However, things could not wait any longer. She must write. Three and a half years did not make much difference in her life. She was young. But in her father's life, what a difference these years must have made. And her grandfather! He was close to seventy, if he was still living. . . .

She hoped he was living, but her heart palpitated in sudden alarm. They had not heard of her in three and a half years. They had not the slightest knowledge of her whereabouts, or how she was getting on. It might have driven the old man to his grave. And her father was so helpless since her mother's death. He had come to look up to her grandfather in all matters of importance, in all decisions. What would become of him now? What *had* become of him? And Robert! He was a man now. She hoped he had learned some kind of a trade. She hoped he was looking after his father a bit. Father needed looking after badly. . . .

It was three o'clock. There was hardly any business at that hour. The newsboy brought in the afternoon paper and laid it on the cashier's desk. Ruth glanced at the headlines. Just then a customer came in. She laid the paper aside and walked over to where the man had taken a seat, to see if everything was in order on the table. She returned to the paper presently. She looked over the first page slowly, turned to the second, the third. . . .

On the third page, under a three-column headline, was a picture of two children, a boy and girl. Below this picture was a photograph of a woman. The faces of the three were strangely familiar. She had seen them before. . . . She was certain she had known them. And . . . She knew them — it was her mother — herself — her brother. It was their pictures, taken long ago. It was the picture of her mother when she was a young woman, long before her illness. She remembered the place where the pictures were taken; and she remembered herself at the time, a little girl of seven; her brother was five. . . . But what were the pictures doing in the paper, in a San Francisco paper? What had happened? What. . . .

She was reading the headlines. They read like fiction —

conveyed no definite meaning. She read further down in the story. Her father's name appeared in the third paragraph. . . . What a strange, roundabout way of talking of her father. Usually the papers told things so plainly. She read on. . . . The paper was about to slip from her fingers. In her mind it was becoming both clear and dark. Her back felt weak, strangely weak — in need of support. . . . She nerved herself and read the story to the end. The tears came with a rush. . . . And then came thoughts, quick, flashing thoughts. She must act, act quickly or it might be too late. She hoped it was not too late already. . . .

Two-thirds of a column was used by the reporter to account for the putting into the paper of the pictures of three unnamed persons.

The reporter told the story leisurely and with evident relish of the thrill he was preparing for his reader: Patrolman Casey of the Chinatown squad was making his usual round at five o'clock that morning when he stumbled upon a man who sat crouched against a wall. The officer took the man to be a drunk or a "bo" who was taking a nap, and poked him in the ribs to wake him. Instead of rising to the summons, however, the crouched figure sagged and fell to one side. The patrolman took a close look and saw that the man was dead. He ordered the wagon and the corpse was taken to the morgue. As they were undressing him they found a leather pouch carefully pinned to the inside of his shirt. For a moment the morgue attendants and the police had visions of a miser who hugged his treasures while dying from starvation. But when they opened the pouch they made a different discovery. The pouch was stuffed with papers — pages with childish scrawls on them. Among the papers were several letters evidently by a wife to her husband, and two photographs, one of a woman and the other of two children.

From the contents of the letters the police believed that the name of the man found dead was Fred Conrad and that he came from New York. . . .

On a marble slab, wrapped tightly in a white sheet, the body of Fred Conrad looked so thin and shrunken that for an instant Ruth thought it could not be her father. But the face and head were his; she knew them at once. The police and morgue officials were standing beside her as she was making the identification and she fought hard to maintain an appearance of calmness. . . . They handed her the leather pouch with the papers, pages from hers and Robert's school tablets when they were learning to write. . . . The letters were in her mother's handwriting. She called for the pictures. A policeman telephoned to the newspaper and the reporter promised to be there with the photographs directly. The police recommended an undertaker to her and while waiting for the pictures, she telephoned to him.

She would have her father to herself at least one whole day and she set the funeral for the third morning. She spent the entire next day in the chapel of the undertaking establishment sitting beside the open coffin. She leaned over her father's head and face and sobbed her story out to him. She gazed at the eyeballs, which protruded stark from under the closed eyelids, with painful yearning, as if she were trying to extract from them the story of her father's life, of his wanderings in those three and a half years since she had seen him. What had brought him to California? Had he knowledge that she was in San Francisco? Had he sought her? It dawned upon her that he must have sought her — sought her all these years. . . . Yes! And she had not given him any clue. If she only had. . . .

It was nearly evening when she heard steps in back of her. She thought the undertaker had come in for something and

did not move. Some one touched her on the shoulder, a policeman.

"A man to see you, Madam. He says he is your brother," the officer spoke softly.

Ruth did not gather the import of his words, but started for the door. Just then the curtains parted. Her brother was coming to meet her. . . .

Robert had not come alone to claim his father's body. With him was a friend and neighbor, Oscar Colson. Colson had taken out a claim on the same day Robert had, and they were given homesteads next to one another. Their homesteads were three hundred miles or so northeast of San Francisco and had they been on the land that day they would probably never have seen the newspaper with the story about Fred Conrad's death and the pictures. But Robert and his friend were in the valley just then. It was the canning season and they had come out to work in a cannery and fortify themselves for the winter.

Colson, or Carlsen as his real name was, was older by eight or ten years than Robert. He, too, had come from New York where he had been a waiter in one of the best known hotels. The son of a Swedish farmer, the call to the land, to a quiet, settled life, proved stronger than the lure of Broadway and the white lights, and he came out to pioneer for his farm. Colson had become greatly attached to his young neighbor.

When Robert showed him the newspaper telling of his father's tragic death, Colson at once offered his services. He would go with Robert to the city. He would advance him the little cash he had and by putting their capital together they might be able to meet the expense of a private funeral. . . .

But when Colson saw Ruth and Robert in each other's

arms, he quickly concluded that it was best for him to vanish until the next day. He knew something of Ruth. Robert had told him of her disappearance and how their father had gone in search of her. He inquired of the undertaker whether everything had been properly arranged for Fred Conrad's burial and was answered in the affirmative. He then requested that his friends be told that he would be in plenty of time for the funeral the next morning, and slipped out quietly.

Ruth and her brother sat through the greater part of the night on the bed in her small room and talked and wept on one another's shoulder, and kissed each other. Robert brought her word from their grandfather. Gottfried was alive. Indeed, he was pioneering with his grandson in spirit — and in cash. His grandfather had been helping him with money from the first week he settled on the land. And though the land was now yielding him a livelihood, Gottfried was still sending him his weekly stipend, occasionally even adding an extra dollar. This was to go toward the house which he was planning to put up the following spring.

Robert described his farm to Ruth. It was still a bare tract located on a hillside on the Eastern slope of the Sierra Mountains. He had built a little barn for his horse and a shack which he called a house for himself. But he had been saving money for a real house and they would put it up during the coming winter. Of course they would build the house by themselves. The neighbors — there were half a dozen of them within a radius of fifteen miles — might lend a helping hand, but they would hire no mechanics of any kind.

He described the boundaries of his homestead. There was a mountain stream at the edge of it — no trouble about water. As for the view, it was really superb. She had never seen sunsets like they had here. He and Colson often stood

in front of his little shack and watched the sun sink between the clustered peaks in the distance, too deeply moved for speech. He had named his homestead Sunnyhill Ranch. . . . It had been his fond dream that his father would spend his old age there, that they would all get together on that ranch. . . .

"You remember how fond father was of California. He wrote to us from. . . ." The rest of Robert's words were lost in sobs. . . .

Colson showed up in the morning and the three followed the hearse in a single carriage. . . . As they were nearing San Francisco on the way back from the cemetery, the afternoon was well advanced. Colson produced a time table. He thought he would take the six o'clock train for Sacramento. That would enable him to catch the train from there to his place of work. He would get there about eleven o'clock, would have a good night's sleep and be on the job again in the morning. He did not say a word about Robert going or staying. . . . An awkward silence followed. The meeting of brother and sister had introduced a new angle into the situation. It was something to think of. And Ruth was thinking. In fact she had thought it out already. Robert expected to save from his work in the cannery about one hundred and fifty dollars. His friend Colson would save as much; three hundred dollars between them. Ruth had nearly six hundred dollars in the bank — her savings.

When the carriage reached Market Street, the cabman asked where he was to drive them.

"To the office of the Western Pacific," Ruth said quickly.

Robert gazed at her questioningly. Colson, too, was at attention.

"What do you want at the Western Pacific?" her brother finally asked.

"I want three tickets for Sunnyhill Ranch," she said. "We want to start as early as possible to-morrow."

"But you don't understand," Robert attempted to explain. "We didn't come direct from home. We work in the valley now. The cannery is nearly two hundred miles this side of Sunnyhill."

"I know," Ruth said and a smile came into her hazy eyes, "I know; but you are not going back to that cannery. You are not going. . . ." Her breath was short. She looked at her brother and swallowed hard.

"You remember," she finally gained control over her throat, "you told me last night that grandfather was pioneering with you in spirit — in cash. Well, I too wish to pioneer with you, though it is almost too late — you have already done nearly all of the pioneering. . . . I have six hundred dollars in the bank. I shall get it out the first thing in the morning. Build your house — your houses," she corrected herself, gazing at Colson. "I would like to help you build them — To cook your meals for you, if nothing else. . . ." She had meant the last words as a jest, but her laugh was unsuccessful. Tears were choking her.

Colson had meant to protest. He could not accept money from a strange woman, even if she was the sister of a friend of his. . . . He would stay behind and work and earn his own money. . . . But he did not say all this. This was no time for it. Ruth had collapsed utterly and he helped his friend bring his sister back to herself, quiet her. He was greatly shaken by the girl's grief, by the whole drama. . . . His own nerves were on the verge of snapping. . . . His protest would wait. . . .

The automobile stage passed within five miles of Sunnyhill Ranch; the nearest railway station was forty miles away.

Robert had asked his grandfather to determine the day he would leave New York two weeks in advance and to write to them. Sunnyhill Ranch was not in telegraphic or telephonic communication with the rest of the world. Even the mails were irregular. His grandfather must write therefore in plenty of time for an answer to reach them. Gottfried replied, setting the date when he would start for the West and Robert awaited the stage and gave the chauffeur instructions to be on the lookout for his grandfather and to bring him on. . . .

Gottfried had written what train he planned to take from Chicago and when that train was due to reach his California destination — the agent in New York had figured it out for him. Robert and Colson, however, agreed that it would be wiser for them not to be too precise. Robert would drive out and meet the stage a day ahead of the schedule, so that in case Gottfried was put on a faster train he would not find himself walking the five miles from where the stage would leave him to their ranch.

The stage passed the nearest point to his ranch at noon and Robert was up bright and early and made ready for the brief journey. He curried the horses with great care; oiled the harness and put several bolts in the wagon where they were needed. Ruth was waiting with dinner. Colson was keeping her company. They were all under too much of a strain to work.

About two o'clock Robert returned — alone. Gottfried was not to be expected now before the next day. Colson thought that there was a likelihood of his not coming even until the day after. There is a slow train from Chicago and it is policy with the railroad to have that train well filled. Unless a passenger is on his guard the ticket man is sure to direct him to this slow train.

They worked little that afternoon. Colson had a railway time-table and map and he and Robert kept following the train on which his grandfather was supposed to be from station to station along the map. There Gottfried would eat his supper — there he would retire for the night — there he would get up. . . .

They were up earlier than usual the next morning, but the time seemed to be moving slower than ever. Finally Robert left. He tried to look calm but he was not. Dinner was ready and Ruth had set the table. She had laid four plates and the arrangement was different — Gottfried was to sit at the head. . . .

It was a quarter to one. Robert was to be given at least another forty-five minutes. He could hardly get back before one-thirty. . . . Colson thought he would go down to the spring for fresh water. . . . He wanted Gottfried's approval of their spring water. . . . Colson was certain that he had never drunk better water in all his life, anywhere. . . . Ruth would not remain alone in the house. . . . Time was creeping dreadfully slow. . . . She went down with him.

They purposely lingered on the way. They wanted to have to wait as little as possible when they returned to the house. . . . They lagged a little too long — or maybe Robert was making faster time than usual. . . . The rattle of wheels was distinctly audible. They walked faster. The team was coming up the narrow road to the house. There were two on the wagon. . . . Ruth sat down her pail of water and ran. She reached her grandfather's side just as Gottfried had set foot on the ground. . . .

BOOK IV

THE HOUSE OF CONRAD

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HOUSEWARMING

CHARLOTTE CRANE was humming as she moved about from one end of the table to the other, straightening the linen. Thirty people in all, every member of the families of Robert Conrad's half-dozen neighbors, would be present at the housewarming. They could not possibly be accommodated in the small dining-room and the tables were set in front of the house under the open sky. Half a dozen yards away, Ruth was busying herself at the stove in her kitchen of four posts and a roof.

Charlotte Crane, nineteen years old, was the daughter of one of Robert's neighbors, Edmond Crane. She was already considered a part of the Conrad family. In the fall she and Robert would be married. She had come over the day before to help Ruth prepare for the party that was to celebrate the completion of the house. . . .

There was a faint rumble in the distance. It died away and then again became audible. Charlotte, accustomed to mountain silences and mountain noises, quickly distinguished the pounding of horses' hoofs and the clatter of wheels. She stopped in her work and searched the hills with her gaze. Robert was passing and she called to him. In a few moments they discerned a team. They could not make out the color of the horses and were speculating as to which one of their neighbors would be the first-comer.

Gottfried Conrad came up with an armful of wood and laid it at his granddaughter's feet, in front of the stove. He

beamed at her fondly as he threw back his shoulders and straightened out his arms. In his corduroy trousers, blue shirt, and heavy boots, Gottfried presented a strange appearance. They were such a contrast to the city clothes Ruth was accustomed to see her grandfather in. She smiled every time she saw him, despite the fact that Gottfried had been wearing these clothes for three weeks now, ever since his arrival from New York.

Gottfried observed Robert and Charlotte gazing intently ahead of them as if studying a far-distant object. He surmised that some one was coming and started toward his grandson to inquire. Robert had his arm about the girl's waist. Gottfried stopped, gazed at the couple for a moment, then turned about noiselessly and walked away in the opposite direction. He was filled with a tender happiness. 'Twas thus he had dreamed. . . . It was more than he had expected, more than he had hoped for. . . .

Presently the team became visible. The Frasers were coming. A shout of delight came from Robert. The Frasers were his nearest neighbors and they had been exceedingly friendly to him. George Fraser had got the title to his land only two years ahead of Robert Conrad and Oscar Colson. He had been a carpenter in a Pennsylvania town. During a prolonged strike in his trade, he drifted West in search of work. In Sacramento one day he read of a new tract of land which the government had thrown open to settlers and he took out a claim. It was a risky thing to do for a man with a family to support, but he was sick of strikes. He wrote his wife to shift as best she could for herself and children for a year or so and then he would be able to help. It was not one year, but three, that the woman had to shift for herself and family, but they had a farm now and the abrasions those three years had made were healed.

George Fraser had proved himself of especial value to Robert in the building of his home. He became his architect, as it were. Robert frequently acknowledged the fact that if it had not been for the erstwhile carpenter, his house might not yet have been completed. Robert knew so little about building.

Mrs. Fraser donned an apron as soon as she arrived. She would not be treated as a "guest." She explained their early arrival by her desire to help with the cooking and baking. The party must be a success and the girls really had too much to do to make it so. Mrs. Fraser commandeered her daughter Edna, a girl of fifteen, to assist Charlotte, while she herself went into the "kitchen" to help Ruth, or rather to turn the girl into her helper.

Old man Fraser, meantime, was unpacking dishes and pans. He had brought a box full of them. The Conrad household was so young; he thought they would need them.

"But where is Willy?" Robert asked, missing the Fraser boy.

"There he comes," Gottfried said, pointing down the road. Willy, a lad of nine, was coming astride a burro which his father had just bought him, and seemed to be enjoying the antics of the donkey hugely.

There was a busy hour and a half for Gottfried while the guests were coming in. He helped them put up their horses, fed them. . . . It was so long since he had fed a horse that he remembered it as if he were in a dream. It was back in Germany at his stepfather's. The memory of it was so far away it seemed to him that it could not be possible that he was once the boy he was now recollecting. . . .

The children had grouped themselves on one side to play, and the women were buzzing about Ruth and Charlotte, lending a helping hand. The men were gathered about one of the

wagons and were discussing the future of their little community. They must take action soon about getting a school of their own. Some of the children would soon be of school age; others had not yet outgrown the age when they still should be studying. It was no way to do things. They ought to select a committee to go down to the county seat and take the proper steps, the proper action.

One or the other of the men from time to time turned to Gottfried for his approval of some suggestion that was made. Although most of the people had met Gottfried but once, on the first Sunday of his arrival from the East, they had a good deal of respect for him. They sized him up as a man of intelligence. His speech was brief and incisive. Besides he was the grandfather of Robert and of Ruth, whom they all thought of highly.

Gottfried tried to listen to everything they were saying, but he could not prevent his mind from wandering to things that were nearer to him. He was thinking of his son. . . . It was only since coming to California that he had gathered the details of Fred's lonely, tragic death. He had not seen his son's grave yet. . . . It was still far away. . . .

A question had been asked him with regard to organizing their community. Gottfried answered it. He spoke a little longer than was his custom. He found himself drifting away from the subject under discussion to something else, something that was on his mind, had been on his mind during all the days that they were preparing for the housewarming, for the entry into their new home, the Conrad House, without his son, without his Fred. . . .

He did not wish at all to cloud the happiness of the day, he was saying, but life and death were inseparable. . . . One was the complement of the other. . . . While they were considering the choosing of a site for a schoolhouse, it might per-

haps not be amiss to choose also a site for a burial ground. In the long run they would have to consider the matter. And if they chose the site for a cemetery now, it would be a great kindness to him. . . . They all knew of his son's death — how he had died before they had reached this haven. He was buried in San Francisco. It was his wish — perhaps a foolish, sentimental wish — to bring his son's ashes here, to bury them in the midst of their community, within sight of their homestead. . . .

Edmond Crane had risen before Gottfried finished speaking, and the others rose with him. For nearly three hours they walked through the fields searching for a proper location, thinking, studying distances. Finally they decided upon a little hillock a short way from the main road. That was to be the community's burial ground. On the way back they selected a committee of one, for the present, to go to the county seat and take the first steps toward giving their newly formed community legal status. . . .

Dinner was on the table by the time the men returned. Though Ruth was busy running to and from the kitchen, Robert managed to get her aside for a moment. In a few hurried words he told her how a burial ground had already been settled upon and of their grandfather's desire to have their father's remains moved from San Francisco and buried within the shadow of their home.

Robert hastened away without looking at his sister, and Ruth looked about for her grandfather. Upon finding his tall figure among the men she gazed at him with moist eyes for a moment, and went back to her work. . . .

The dinner lasted until late in the afternoon. When the tables were finally removed and the ground cleared, the children played games, while the men and women talked and jested. Robert and his grandfather had managed to slip

into their Sunday clothes just before dinner, and now went about among the guests, looking after every one's comfort, making sure that every one was enjoying himself, was happy. Oscar Colson, whose rôle was midway between that of a guest and a member of the Conrad household, had gone to the spring with Willy Fraser for fresh water. They returned with it and Ruth presently appeared with a bowl of lemonade. Some one called for a song.

"Edna, a song. Give us a song! Edna! Edna!"

George Fraser's fifteen-year-old daughter was famed for her voice among their neighbors. And she knew many songs: she had learned them all in school—"back in the East." It was not until she had nearly finished the eighth grade that the call to California came from her father.

"Edna, Edna!" the voices kept calling. A circle formed. Men and women sat on the ground, or on benches.

Edna stepped forward. She was thinking. Presently she began.

A wave of satisfaction spread over every face. She was singing the song they all loved so well, the song they all thought she sang best.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot . . ."

Edna was gazing above the heads of her listeners. Her eyes seemed to be piercing the distance, spanning the continent back to that town in Pennsylvania, to her home, to her friends, schoolmates, memories—"back East."

"We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne."

All of the men and women were humming, swaying — all except Colson and Gottfried. Both of them had emigrated to America after they had received their schooling in the Old

World. Colson, however, was visibly affected by the song. . . . Robert was sitting with his arms about Charlotte's shoulders. Colson sought Ruth's hand and took it in his. . . .

Gottfried had heard only the first stanza of the song. The rest was lost to him in the swaying and humming of the people. He was gazing at them, gazing at Robert and Charlotte, at Ruth and Colson. . . . He was grateful — grateful for this House of his. He was happy, and he was lonely. If Fred had only been there among them. . . .

The song was ended. There was applause, approval, clamor for more. Gottfried rose and slipped away unnoticed. He walked around the house. From the other side of it he could see the place they had chosen as a cemetery. It was a splendid location, right in the course of the sun. He looked at the sun. It was sinking among the hills. More than half of it was already gone below the snow-peaks of the Sierras. . . . Yes, a splendid location. . . . Edna was singing again. The strains of a school song reached his ears. . . . Before his eyes shadows were hovering. . . .

THE END

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